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AN
INTELLECTUAL APPROACH
TO ISLAM

by

Allama Abbas Haider Abidi

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by

Allama Abbas Haider Abidi



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1st Edition	Dec. 1988
Copies	1,000
Price	Rs. 50.00
(excluding postage)	£ 2.50
	\$ 3.00

Published by
Mustafain & Murtazain (Pvt) Limited.
"PCC House"
HC-12, Block-5, Kehkashan, Clifton,
Karachi.

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Premise

This book entitled "An Intellectual Approach to Islam" is a collection of treatises written by Allama Abbas Haider Abidi, a reputed religious scholar who is also gifted with a unique breadth of vision. As the title of this book reflects, the Allama has tried to approach and interpret Islam in a rational way. How comprehensively he has outlined religion, religious laws and jurisprudence in the following lines:

"The above verse makes it clearly manifest that religion gives birth to religious laws. As a matter of fact, one needs his life to be governed by religious laws after he has reposed his belief in religion. In other words, it can be said that religion is like the stem of a tree and religious laws are its branches. When one has embraced faith by having reposed his belief in all the essentials, he is further asked to submit himself by performing the fundamentals of Islam which are also called the five pillars of faith. When one further wants to know as how to pray or when and how to fast or how and to whom pay the cess, such questions come under the purview of jurisprudence."

While dwelling on jurisprudence at length, the learned author aptly but lucidly writes the following passages:

"Jurisprudence is the third category wherefrom differences begin. Such differences existed even during the period of the Companions (R.A.) of the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.). The four grand Imams of Ahle-Sunnat had divergence of opinion on many matters in the realm of the juris. As regards the rights of a neighbour in a property, Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifa's (R.A.) point of view was diametrically opposed to that of Hazrat Imam

Shaafe'i (R.A.). Similarly, there are variations in the views at many places. If the Imam is reciting a Surah during the prayer, other followers should stand silent: on this point, there is a consensus of opinion between Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (A.S.) and Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifa (R.A.) but Hazrat Imam Shaafe'i differs.

"In matters of raising hand, there is an agreement between Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (A.S.) and Imam Maalik (R.A.) but Imam Abu Hanifa (R.A.) holds a different view. In the past, the scholars and the jurists were so broad-minded that they held each other in high esteem, despite their differences in academic and scholastic fields. They also accommodated the points of view of their adversaries to a considerable extent. Those great scholars and jurists did not brush aside the points of view of their opponents. On the other hand, they reflected on the varying opinion, trying to find out correct solutions to ever-growing problems in the nascent Muslim society. The touch-stones indeed were the Holy Quran and the Sunnah. Therefore, when Imam Shaafe'i once visited the mausoleum of Imam Abu Hanifa at Baghdad, he abandoned his own way of prayer and prayed after the fashion of Imam Abu Hanifa. When people asked him the reason of change, he replied that it was in deference to the personality of the late Imam. Another example is that of late Maulana Muhammad Hasan, the founder of Ashrafia Madarsa at Lahore. When Maulana Daood Ghaznavi called on Maulana Muhammad Hasan, he requested his guest to lead the prayer. At the same time, Maulana Hasan urged his followers to pronounce 'Amen' very very emphatically because it was the method of Maulana Ghaznavi."

Himself a great advocate of inter-sectarian harmony among all the sets of Islam, Allama Abidi appears to have dedicated his life to this task. That is why he is loved and respected not only by the religious scholars of other sects but by the people as a whole, irrespective of their caste, creed and colour. The Allama knows it well that love begets love and hatred breeds hatred. Being fully conscious of this fact, he has been endeavouring in this hatred-charged world to transmit love. He has made the dissemination of

love as the very mission of his life. How far his efforts are going to be crowned with success, only future will tell. But in this dark and dreary atmosphere, whenever the silver linings appear on the horizon, I feel that the efforts made by Allama Abidi and men like him are not being wasted. To quote Faiz Ahmed Faiz:

ٹھہری ہوئی ہے شب کی سیاہی وہیں مگر
کچھ کچھ سحر کے رنگ درخشاں تھے تو ہیں
اب بھی خزاں کا راج ہے لیکن کہیں کہیں
گوشے وہ چین کے غزلخواں تھے تو ہیں

Lingering is yet the bleakness of night,
But distant is not dawn.
The rigours of autumn yet persist,
But audible are the songs of swan.

There is no denying the fact that religion is a force. It is also an established fact that no sect, however insignificant and ineffective, can be eliminated or brow-beaten on the basis of brute force or impeccable coercion. Intimidation, on the other hand, will lend it vigour and strength. So, when no sect can be exterminated by coercion, why not to live with love and amity and allow others to live so. This lesson the bigoted and narrow-minded Muslim priests have never learnt. It was because of the sectarian prejudices fanned by the obscurantists that much damage was done to the Muslim world in the past. How beautifully the Allama has explained this dark aspect of the Muslim history. He says:

"The Muslim history is a witness that the condition of juristic differences had become alarmingly horrible during the last days of the Abbasid period. Even minor differences gave birth to major controversies and, on each such difference, there was the label of apostasy. It also led to bloodshed. One sect of the Muslims started expelling the other sect from the fold of Islam. Such was the mutual discord that the majority sect of the Muslims used to openly denounce the minority sect from the pulpit. Ibn Kasir writes that in the year 475 Hijri when Sharif Abul Qasim was appointed preacher of Madarsa-

e-Nazimia of Baghdad, the institution founded by Nizamul-Mulk, he openly denounced Hanbala from the pulpit and branded him as an apostate. The government of that time was all praise for Sharif Abul Qasim and bestowed upon him the title of "Alim-ul-Sant" in recognition of his meritorious services. While writing the exegis of the Holy Quran, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad says that the real cause of the invasion of Tartarians was the sectarian feud prevailing among the Muslims and no Muslim historian can ever ignore this fact. At Khorasan, there was a raging battle between the Hanafiites and the Shafeiites. That was why the Hanafiites, being absolutely disgusted with the Shafeiites, invited Halagu Khan. They opened the gates of the walled city. But when the Tartarians assaulted, they neither spared the Hanafiites nor the Shafeiites. Men belonging to both the sects were done to death. In the same way, the reason of Halagu's attack on Baghdad lay in the enmity between the Sunnis and the Shiites. The Shiites had invited Halagu Khan to attack Baghdad. As regards the religious scholars and jurists, they were busy in idle discussion whether one should take bath before or after eating yoghurt when the army of Halagu Khan was attacking Baghdad. Similarly, the Muslim scholars of Samarqand were busy in discussion over an issue whether or not the removal of a grey hair was lawful when the Russian forces captured the state of Samarqand."

To the Allama, the real cause of the destruction of the culture and civilization in many parts of the Muslim world is sectarian feud. This feud is always created by the dogmatic and narrow-minded priest who has, with a few exceptions, invariably been a purchasable commodity. It is he who has always served the wish of his master. The Allama sheds a flood of light on this highly deplorable role of the Muslim priests and this dark aspect of the Muslim society. He says:

"Ever since the emergence of monarchy, the rulers have got the Muslim scholars involved in petty juristic junkets for their own political considerations lest the Muslims should unite and the real spirit of Islam should

prevail. The Muslim rulers have always been afraid of the mass awakening and the demand for human rights as granted by Islam."

There is no doubt that Allama Abidi is one of the few great orators in this country. It is because of his oratory and preaching that he is not only known all over Pakistan but even abroad. Beyond the frontiers of this country, there are thousands of his admirers who often wish to be profitted by his learning and erudition. He too does not disappoint them and, despite his preoccupations, finds time to quench their thirst for knowledge. Among his admirers, most of the people are settled in U.K., U.S.A., Canada, African and Middle Eastern countries. He is also very much appreciated and respected by his followers in India. Originally hailing from Hyderabad Deccan, having his ancestral connexions with U.P., the Allama is a happy blend of the two cultures. A living monument of nobleness and grace as he is, the Allama's heart appears to be full of the milk of human kindness. His warmth, cordiality and humane outlook always remind me of a couplet of Mirza Ghalib:

میں نے تپا چوں کہ اتنا نہیں دیا میں کوئی
جو کرے تعزیرِ مجاہد و وفا میرے بعد

My heart bleeds in lamentation,
Who exists after me for love and affection?

Beyond doubt, Allama Abidi is a reputed preacher, but he is at the same time a great observer of human nature. He keeps an unerring eye on the foibles of human beings, irrespective of their status or station in life. But what is more striking that he has the courage to call a spade a spade. It is said that truth is always bitter: it is all the more bitter if it is stated about the ruler. There is no denying the fact that great men all over the ages have paid the heaviest prices and, amidst the heavy odds against them, they have been steadfastly firm in their conviction. For upholding truth, Socrates had to drink the cup of hemlock and Hallaj as well as Sarmad had to suffer the most gruesome agonies. The greatest exponent of truth who has been and shall continue to be the best model not only for Allama but for millions of the mankind is Hazrat

Imam Husain (A.S.), the grand-son of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny). He has set a unique example of upholding truth. Inspired as the Allama is by the radiating personality of his beloved Holy Imam, he always tries his best to state truth. For the assertion of truth, he cares the least for the consequences. His main concern is veracity whose faithful expression demands a bold and noble heart. The Allama definitely possesses that heart. When his first treatise appeared on the horizon, late President Zia-ul-Haq was still alive and all-powerful.* But it was only Abbas Haider Abidi who had the courage and conviction to say:

"..... During the entire period of his rule, he (President Zia-ul-Haq) kept on crying 'Islam, Islam'. It was only the lip sympathy which he paid to Islam because he neither took any concrete step for the revival of moral values nor did he try to uphold justice and respect of law in the society. Other important aspects, such as basic human rights, dignity of man and supremacy of learning and knowledge remained obscured too. He tried to implement Islam through flogs. It's an admitted fact that punitive measures are adopted to curb the evil and not to improve the good. If you wish to eradicate the evil without encouraging the good, the evil may very likely change its form but it will never be uprooted.

"General Zia-ul-Haq perhaps adopted this course because the members of Jamat-e-Islami, the men close to him and some religious scholars who enjoyed his confidence, counselled him to do so. The past history is a testimony that whenever the religious scholars enjoyed the confidence of their rulers, they have always oppressed and tyrannised men having different faiths. These scholars have always acted in utter violation of the teachings of the Holy Quran which glaringly says 'For you is your religion; for me is mine'."

At another place in the same treatise, the learned Allama has made an assessment of the personality of President Zia-ul-Haq in the following words:

* The first treatise of the Allama appeared under the caption "Afkaar-e-Parshan" in January, 1988, some extracts of the treatise were also published in the daily "Jung".

"There is no denying the fact that family background has much of its influence on the development of personality. Training too plays its important role. President Zia-ul-Haq was born in a puritan family. He was the son of a Moulvi. Therefore, so puritanic he became that, to quote his own words, he used to attend school and college in the British days by wearing Shalwar and Kameez. During the early period of his service, whenever his Commending Officer needed to summon President Zia, he sent a person to a mosque where the latter was generally found.

"The real problem in our society is that we consider only that person God-fearing and good who makes a particular type of appearance or adopts a conventional life-style. At the same time, he clings to his own faith which he has inherited and denounces men of other faiths as 'Kaafirs'. In addition to that, he starts considering customs and traditions as the inalienable part of religion while the fact is that Islam has nothing to do with the local customs and traditions.

"However, whereas President Zia-ul-Haq's impressionistic mind was considerably influenced by his puritanic upbringing; he also looked with open eyes at the other side of life, especially during his different postings within and outside the country. There too, his perceptions did n't go without impressions. This contrast did create a cleavage in his mind. The result was that he became a dual personality. In the psychological term, such a person is also called 'a splitted personality'."

How candid and bold was Allama Abidi when he pointed out the following shortcomings of the ruling President:

"As said earlier, President Zia's entire period of rule has unfortunately been marked by the lack of any significant achievement in all walks of life. Besides this major drawback, there are men including his admirers, who often criticise him for certain lapses. The biggest charge levelled against President Zia is that he is the person who put Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto on the gal-

lows. Secondly, the corruption of bribery reached its extreme limits during his reign and he took no proper measures either to curb or uproot it. He himself has, on some occasions, admitted the fact that bribery has been rampant in our society. Thirdly, it is during his period of rule that the menace of drug mafia has alarmingly reached its magnitude. Further, the irony that some of the top-notchers of the country are seemingly involved in the promotion of this evil. Fourthly, President Zia promised the nation to hold general elections within 90 days of the imposition of Martial Law, but in utter violation of his own promise and on the sheer pretext of the objective conditions, he has been ruling the country for more than 10 years. Fifthly, through his manipulations, he has not only weakened but enormously damaged the political parties. Sixthly, it was during his reign that the orgy of sectarianism, communalism and provincialism raised its ugly head. As a result of it, there was much of blood-shed. Lastly, he patronised his own brand of faith on the government level....."

A man of great vision as Allama Abidi is, some of his premonitions which appeared in these treatises, have come true. His clairvoyance prompted him to write the following words. It is all the more strange that he had perceived the impending doom at the time when there prevailed a lull and there appeared not the least trace of any storm underneath the political surface. Look, how premonitory were his words!:

"But despite all the achievements of the Prime Minister, there exists a fundamental difference between him and the President. General Zia did enjoy the support of the army. He still enjoys the same. So long as he is in the good books of the army Generals, he is absolutely safe. On the other hand, Prime Minister Junjo is a representative of people. His real force springs from the masses. He is so simple and conscientious that during all the period of tenure of his office stretching over more than three years, he neither tried to be popular among the masses on the basis of his selfless service, nor did his own partymen ever bother to form his image. The Prime

Minister should have perhaps avoided his image-building lest his increasing popularity in the masses should create doubts in the mind of the President. It is because of the fact the President is still the real key to power: the Prime Minister is nothing but a shadow."

Primarily and essentially, Allama Abidi is a religious scholar. But at the same time, he has delved deep into Economics, especially Islamic Economics. It was in Economics that he earned his Master degree long ago. He intends to bring to limelight the true economic system of Islam which, if adopted in its true spirit, is sure to castigate the evils of Capitalism and Communism. His learned lectures, televised on the national TV network, have touched the hearts of millions of TV watchers. Preoccupied as he is, I hope that he will spare some more time for writing in order to illumine the dark corridors of human psyche.

I equally hope that the readers of this book will gain a lot in order to lead strife-free, happy and contented lives. The salutary effect that the contents of this book are very likely to exercise on the minds of the readers, I believe that it will help a great deal in shedding petty prejudices of sectarianism and provincialism. The demon of hatred is nothing but the fire of the worst kind. It may burn or not burn the issues of hatred, but it definitely reduces to ashes the person who has allowed his mind and heart to be an easy prey to hatred of any kind. The need of the hour is that we should learn the lesson of love. Love always begets love. Beyond doubt, it's the greatest weapon with which the whole world can be conquered. It is my firm belief that our salvation and the salvation of this country lies in the message of love and this book disseminates that message.

In the end, I must express my gratitude to Professor S.G. Abbas whose untiring efforts have made possible the publication of this book. I am equally thankful to the famous poet, Raghīb Muradabadi for his valuable help in the completion of this book.

HUSAIN NASSER,
Chief Executive.

December 1, 1988.

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ISLAM'S REAL MESSAGE

(This chapter was written by the author
on 6.1.1988)

For the last ten years, slogans of "Nizam-e-Mustafa", "Nizam-e-Islam" and "Nifaz-e-Islam" have been constantly echoing in this country. For nine years or so, Martial Law continued to last. It was the outcome of the Nizam-e-Mustafa Movement, the Movement launched vigorously by the Pakistan National Alliance. There is no doubt that, during this period, General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, the President of Pakistan, did his best to introduce the Islamic system in the country but his efforts unfortunately remained confined to the narrow limits of the obscurantists. The President also endeavoured to evoke the interest of the scholars and intellectuals in matters pertaining to Islam. He tried his utmost to get religious affairs out of the hands of the extremists, entrusting thereby all matters to the scholars and the intellectuals. But, instead of contributing their share, if not wholly, then partly, these intellectuals and elites, for reasons best known to them, remained considerably withdrawn. The bureaucracy had its own axe to grind. At last, with all candour and sincerity, the President had to accept his failure.

Subsequently, for certain political motives at its background, the Shariat Bill loomed large on the horizon. Whether that Bill was a sincere effort in the direction of implementation of the Islamic laws or it was a sheer conspiracy of a political party which has been exploiting the fair name of Islam for its selfish ends ever since its

inception. The strategy of that party looked that, after the passage of the Bill, the National Assembly and the Senate would be reduced to nothingness, and then it would be very easy to grab power through the back-door. This party knows it very well that it can never lawfully come into power by enjoying the confidence of the majority of people. Although its slogan is Islam; its entire organisational set-up is based on the communist and fascist ideology. Before the creation of Pakistan, the full-throated slogan of this party was: "First make Muslims, then establish a Muslim State." Its an established fact that the insinuated party opposed tooth and nail the creation of Pakistan. But after Pakistan had emerged on the map of the world as an independent and sovereign state, it changed its strategy. Now its policy is: "First grab power, then make Muslims." In view of its ideology, this party has evolved a new policy.

For this party, however, Shariat Bill is the need of the hour. But before we discuss the Shariat Bill in its entirety, we shall have to understand Islam in its true perspective. In Islam, religion (دِين) is the prime factor. Secondly, there are the divine injunctions called the religious laws (شَرِيعَة). In the third place, there ranks the jurisprudence (تَقْدِير). In the whole of Quran, no term such as "system", "constitution", "code of laws" or "ideology" has ever been used for Islam. At one place, however, its complete definition is given in Verse no. 30 of Surah 'Rome':

30. So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright - the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He hath created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ
اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ
لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ۚ

Then followed another divine injunction which exists in Verse no. 40 of Surah 'Yusuf':

Who hath commanded you that ye worship none save Him. This is the right religion, but most men know not.

أَلَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا إِنَّا ذَلِكُمْ
الدِّينُ الْقَيُّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ
يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

In Verse no. 28 of Surah 'Fatah' of the Holy Quran, the divine commandment is as given under:

28. He it is Who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions. And Allah sufficeth as a witness.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَ
دِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظَاهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ
وَلَقَدْ يَكْفِي الْإِنْسَانُ حَسَدًا ۝٢٨

In the shape of Verse no. 2 of Surah 'A'zuzr', the revelation came as follows:

2. Lo! We have revealed the Scripture unto thee (Muhammad) with truth; so worship Allah, making religion pure for Him (only).

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ
اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ۝٢

And according to the 26th Verse of Surah 'Al-Moarij' which is given as under:

26. And those who believe in the Day of Judgement,

وَالَّذِينَ يُصَلُّونَ خَوْفًا يَذْكُرِ الدِّينَ ۝٢٦

Therefore, in the light of the Quranic verses as cited above, it became evident that religion (دِين) means belief in the existence of a single God, belief in the prophethood of Hazrat Mohammad (p.b.u.h.) as the Last Messenger of God, belief in the Holy Quran as the divine gospel and belief in the occurrence of the Doomsday. After one has had belief in the these things, he will naturally ask himself what to do next. At this stage, Islam tells him to pray, to fast, to pay cess, to go for the pilgrimage and to fight in the way of God. All these, put together, are called religious laws (شريعة). The religious laws contain within their body such topics as contract of marriage, divorce and all which is lawful as well as unlawful. It is clearly stated in the 13th Verse of Surah 'A'shura':

13. He hath ordained for you that religion which He commended unto Noah, and that which We inspire in thee (Muhammad), and that which We commended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: Establish the religion, and be not divided therein.

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى
بِهِ نُوحًا وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى
وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِمْ الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا
فِيهِ ۝١٣

The above Verse makes it clearly manifest that religion (دين) gives birth to religious laws (شريعة). As a matter of fact, one needs his life to be governed by the religious laws after he has reposed his belief in religion. In other words, it can be said that religion is like the stem of a tree and religious laws are its branches. When one has embraced faith by having reposed his belief in all the essentials, he is further asked to submit himself by performing the fundamentals of Islam which are also called the five pillars of faith. When one further wants to know as how to pray or when and how to fast or how and to whom pay the cess, such questions come under the purview of jurisprudence (فقه).

Broadly speaking, jurisprudence deals with the subject matter of technical nature. For example, the phases that one has to go through while offering prayers, are the subject matter of jurisprudence. Similarly, there are many topics which this branch of learning deals with. There came the divine injunction in 122nd Verse of Surah 'Tauba' which is given as under:

122. And the believers should not all go out to fight. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they (who are left behind) may gain sound knowledge in religion, and that they may warn their folk when they return to them so that may beware.

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنفِرُوا كَافَّةً
فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِن كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ
طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا
قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَحْذَرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

Jurisprudence is the third category wherefrom differences begin. Such differences existed even during the period of the Companions (R.A.) of the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.). The four grand Imams of Ahle-Sunnat had divergence of opinion on many matters in the realm of the juris. As regards the right of a neighbour in a property, Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifa's (R.A.) point of view was diametrically opposed to that of Hazrat Imam Shaafei (R.A.). Similarly, there are variations in the views at many places. If the Imam is reciting a Surah during the prayer, other followers should stand silent: on this point, there is a consensus of opinion between Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (A.S.) and Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifa (R.A.), but Hazrat Imam Shaafei differs.

In matter of raising hands (رُفْعُ يَدَيْنِ), there is an agreement between Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (A.S.) and Imam Maalik (R.A.), but Imam Abu Hanifa (R.A.) holds a different view. In the past, the scholars and the jurists were so broad-minded that they held each other in high esteem, despite their differences in academic and scholastic fields. They also accommodated the points of view of their adversaries to a considerable extent. Those great scholars and jurists did not brush aside the points of view of their opponents. On the other hand, they reflected on the varying opinion, trying to find out correct solutions to ever-growing problems in the nascent Muslim society. The touch-stone indeed were the Holy Quran and the Sunnah. Therefore, when Imam Shaafei (R.A.) once visited the mausoleum of Imam Abu Hanifa (R.A.) at Baghdad, he abandoned his own way of prayer and prayed after the fashion of Imam Abu Hanifa (R.A.). When people asked him the reason of the change, he replied that it was in deference to the personality of the late Imam. Another example is that of late Maulana Mohammad Hasan, the founder of Ashrafya Madarsa at Lahore. When Maulana Daood Ghaznavi called on Maulana Mohammad Hasan, he requested his guest to lead the prayer. At the same time, Maulana Hasan urged his followers to pronounce Amen very very emphatically because it was the method of Maulana Ghaznavi.

About three decades ago, Sheikh Mohammad Shariati had founded a religious institution at Frere Road in Karachi. In that institution, some children of Hanafi faith too got their education. After some time, the parents of those children expressed their wish that their children be taught their own fiqh. Hazrat Sheikh Shariati instantly made provision for a Sunni moulvi and those children were taught in accordance with their faith.

Ever since the emergence of monarchy, the rulers have got the Muslim scholars involved in petty juristic junkets for their own political considerations lest the Muslims should unite and the real spirit of Islam should prevail. The Muslim rulers have always been afraid of the mass awakening and the demand for human rights as granted by Islam.

The Muslim history is a witness that the condition of juristic differences had become alarmingly horrible during the last days of the Abbasaid period. Even minor differences gave birth to major

controversies and, on each such difference, there was the label of apostasy. It also led to bloodshed. One sect of the Muslims started expelling the other sect from the fold of Islam. Such was the mutual discord that the majority sect of the Muslims used to openly denounce the minority sect from the pulpit. Ibn-e Kasir writes that in the year 475 Hijra when Sharif Abul Qasim was appointed 'Waciz' (preacher) of Madarsa-e-Nizamia of Baghdad, the institution founded by Nizamul-Mulk, he openly denounced Hanabla from the pulpit and branded him as an apostate. The government of that time was all praise for Sharif Abul Qasim and bestowed upon him the title of "Alim-ul-Sant" in recognition of his meritorious services. While writing the exegesis of the Holy Quran, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad says that the real cause of the invasion of the Tartarians was the sectarian feud prevailing among the Muslims and no Muslim historian can ever ignore this fact. At Khorasan, there was a raging battle between the Hanafiites and the Shafeiites. That was why the Hanafiites, being absolutely disgusted with the Shafeiites, invited Halagu Khan. They opened the gates of the walled city. But when the Tartarians assaulted, they neither spared the Hanafiites nor the Shafeiites. Men belonging to both sects were done to death. In the same way, the reason of Halagu's attack on Baghdad lay in the enmity between the Sunnis and the Shiites. The Shiites had invited Halagu Khan to attack Baghdad. As regards the religious scholars and jurists, they were busy in idle discussion whether one should take bath before or after eating yoghurt when the army of Halagu Khan was attacking Baghdad. Similarly, the Muslim scholars of Samarkand were busy in discussion over an issue whether or not the removal of a grey hair was lawful when the Russian forces captured the State of Samarkand.

The events mentioned above are just a few out of myriad of kindred nature. But these events do reflect our horrible and ignominious past and I have purposely brought them to limelight so as to impress upon my readers, emphasising thereby the fact that the nations which learn no lesson from their past, can neither improve their present conditions nor can they make their future bright.

Striving as we are in the name of the Shariat Bill so as to impose the faith of a particular sect on other sects, by doing so are we not trying to repeat the sad history of our past? Do we want to confine

the unbounded and limitless span of Islam to its narrowest limits? Such a slogan whether it is raised by the Sunnis or the Shias, is sure to undo the unifying coherence of the nation. It will definitely deal a terrific blow to the integrity of the country. Such an apprehension was very aptly pointed by a newspaper called "Siyasat". It's a largely circulated daily of Urdu which is published from Hyderabad Deccan. In one of its publications in the month of October, 1987, the paper says that the policy of Islamisation as pursued by General Zia-ul-Haq, the President of Pakistan, has enflamed sectarianism in the country.

Beyond doubt, President Zia-ul-Haq appears to be Islam-loving and, for the first time in Pakistan, his love for Islam has engendered a feeling in the countrymen that one should abide by the injunctions which God has communicated through His last Messenger. Thus, the credit goes to President Zia-ul-Haq who has created an atmosphere for the acceptance of Islam in the country. Further, there is no denying the fact that the masses are always inspired by the quality and character of their leadership. Self-effacing and self-abnegating as President Zia is, he has won almost every wager during the last ten years of his rule on the basis of these two virtues. Although he has never used Jinnah cap, yet he has brought in vogue the use of sherwani. Further, he kept on using the dress (Shalwar, Kameez and Koti) which was accorded formal recognition by Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. President Zia abstained from wine and women. He did not indulge himself in bribery too. During the entire period of his rule, he kept on crying 'Islam, Islam'. It was only the lip sympathy which he paid to Islam because he neither took any concrete step for the revival of moral values nor did he try to uphold justice and respect of law in the society. Other important aspects, such as basic human rights, dignity of man and supremacy of learning and knowledge remained obscured too. He tried to implement Islam through flogs. It's an admitted fact that punitive measures are adopted to curb the evil and not to impede the good. If you wish to eradicate the evil without encouraging the good, the evil may very likely change its form but it will never be uprooted.

General Zia-ul-Haq perhaps adopted this course because the members of Jamat-e-Islami, the men close to him and some religious scholars who enjoyed his confidence, counselled him to do so.

The past history is a testimony that whenever the religious scholars have enjoyed the confidence of their rulers, they have always oppressed and tyrannised men having different faiths. These scholars have always acted in utter violation of the teachings of the Holy Quran which glaringly says, "For you is your religion; for me is mine."

6. Unto you your religion, and
unto me my religion.

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

During the period of much-trumpeted Nizam-e-Mustafa, some prominent ulemas were heard saying, "Mr. President! first of all, make the T.V. Muslim. The women appearing on its screen, should be veiled. One who does not keep beard, be jailed. The coming out of women from their homes, should be declared unlawful." None else but the Head of an eminent organisation like the Advisory Council gave a statement to the Press that any such boy who appeared on the road at the prayer-time, should be sentenced for 15 strips. That statement of the Head of the Advisory Council was in utter violation of the divine injunction because nowhere in the Holy Quran there existed such a command, nor did the Holy Prophet ever ask for such a thing. Similarly, there exists no such rule in the juries of Imam-e-Arba nor in the jurisprudence of Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (A.S.).

Prayer is fundamentally and essentially a communion between God and His creatures. For the dereliction of this duty, the right of accountability rests with God alone, and that too on the Doomsday. It appears that these self-styled champions of Islam, under the pseudo fervour of religion, want to deprive God of His powers too. It is an appreciable fact that despite some of his political limitations, President Zia-ul-Haq is a man of immense political acumen; otherwise, Pakistan too would have changed into another Baghdad of the olden times.

When loud speaker was invented and it was used for the first time, the fanatics opposed its use in mosques and got it declared as unlawful. As a result of it, many murders took place and many valuable human lives were lost. But when the society accepted its use, they too accepted it and now their preaching without it is undesirable. For such persons, the act of the Prophet of Islam was

surely to teach a lesson. At first, Hazrat Bilal was the only person who made prayer calls; but when the number of the Muslims increased, the Holy Prophet placed another caller at the distance beyond which the voice of Hazrat Billa could not be heard. That person used to repeat the calls of Hazrat Bilal. When the number of the Muslims further increased, a third caller was made to stand beyond the hailing distance of the second caller. He used to repeat the prayer-call of the second caller. The real purpose of addition in the number of callers was to inform the faithfuls that the prayer-time had come. The function performed by three persons in those days, can easily be discharged today by a loud-speaker.

In the Muslim Society, the concept of 'pulpit' was borrowed from places of worship of the Romans. It was adopted on the advice of Hazrat Salman Farsi. 'Saravil' which is now called 'Shalwar' was imported from Iran and was presented to the Holy Prophet as a gift. The Prophet was not only pleased to accept that gift but he used it too.

The sum and substance of my writing this treatise is to draw the kind attention of my readers, especially those 200 Members of the National Assembly who represent 100 million people of country. Since these members have the power to enact laws, therefore I ask them whether, by accepting the Shariat Bill which is drafted by obscurantists and fanatics, they will allow the country to be ravaged by sectarian prejudices and petty-mindedness or they will be guided by wisdom and sagacity so as to limit only the government to the Shariat and leave the juristic affairs to the wish of each sect.

Further, one thing should be clearly borne in mind that jurisprudence is that law which provides protection to the fundamentals of the Shariat. Every law has its two aspects. The first aspect deals with its meaning, the second with its object. In its meaning, every law appears to be the same; but at the time of its application, it's sometimes the meaning and sometimes the object which is given due consideration. For example, section 302 is framed as a deterrent against murder. But if the murder is intentional and volitional, the murderer is to be dealt within that clause which is punishable with death or life punishment. Here the legal implication will be in accordance with the meaning of the law. But if the same murder is committed either by an insane person or by a minor and it's all

accidental, the murderer will not be punished with death or life imprisonment. For example, if somebody is cleaning the barrel of his gun and he does not know that there is a cartridge in it; suddenly, there is a shot and a person gets killed. In that case, the murderer is not to be punished either with death or life imprisonment, although here too the nature of crime is the same. In this case, the objective aspect of law will be taken into consideration and the insane person or the minor or the person committing unintentional crime, will not be punishable with murder or life punishment.

Laws are framed to keep the society stable. If we make such laws which create confusion or friction in the society, we are then on one hand debasing our own laws; on the other hand, we are showing our incompetence to dispense with law. Generally speaking, the exploitation of law is made either by the autocratic rulers or those scholars of religion who are not God-fearing and are always governed by the impulse of selfish motive. Men of deep learning and of sound moral character do rank much above. A common man with a clear conscience never bargains with law for the sake of his personal gains. A glaring example before us is that of Imam Abu Hanifa (R.A.) that when Mansoor Abbasi, the ruler of Baghdad, wished to elevate him to the post of the Chief Justice, Imam Abu Hanifa declined to accept it, pleading that he would not prove equal to the task. On the refusal of the Imam, the ruler became extremely angry and, out of anger, when he remarked, "You speak a lie," the Imam instantly replied, "If I am speaking a lie, why do you wish to entrust this high office to a liar? On the other hand, if you deem my statement as correct, then accept what I say." It's not an easy task to oppose the ruler for the sake of truth. Therefore, Imam Abu Hanifa had to suffer the punishment of flogging. He had to undergo the punishment of imprisonment too. But he had the courage to face the odds of life. He never compromised on principles. The temptations of easy and contented temporal life had no attraction for him. But, by setting a noble example for the respect of law and for upholding truth in the dark dungeon of Muslim history, Imam Abu Hanifa has left the foot-prints which men of exceptional heroism and lovers of truth shall continue to follow throughout ages. Another part of the same history is that Qazi Abu Yusuf managed to acquire that post of Chief Justice which Imam Abu Hanifa had declined to accept.

In my considered opinion, the religious policy pursued by the last Martial Law Government in which sectarianism was made to play its sordid and sinister role, was nothing but highly deplorable. That is why Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo was constrained to pronounce prudently that he could approve of only that Shariat Bill which was acceptable to all the sects of the Muslims. The Prime Minister can discharge this function only at that time when he has clearly grasped the distinction between the "Shariat" and the "Fiqh" and when he has resolved to keep the Government limited to the Shariat.

Honestly speaking, Mr. Mohammad Khan Junejo is a serious, sober-minded and sagacious person who is a thorough gentleman as well. Pains-taking and enduring as he has proved himself, but during the two-year period of his rule the way he has conducted the thorny affairs of the country with prudence and foresight, these inborn qualities of Mr. Junejo cannot be ignored too. The fact is that he is the choice of Pir Saheb of Pagara. But President Zia is reaping the reward of all the achievements of Mr. Junejo. Had there been any other person in place of him, it would not only have been difficult but perhaps impossible to cope with the President who is yet the semblance of the Martial Law. Mr. Junejo is, on the other hand, the elected representative of the Parliament. But despite this sharp contrast, the Prime Minister is very ably coping with the President.

His personal merits coupled with his flawless character have earned him a distinction which he rightly deserves. His uprightness could not be denied even by his worst enemies. As the Prime Minister, he tried his best to fulfil the commitments which he made to the people and nation. Among many feathers of his cap, the most conspicuous are the recently held Local Bodies' elections. These elections were certainly held in a free and fair manner and there was not the least intervention of the Government. This credit too goes to Mr. Junejo. The results of the elections at Karachi and Hyderabad where MQM gained a resounding victory and the N.W.F.P. where the People's Party scored the largest number of seats, are a glaring proof that the Government made no manipulation, whether directly or indirectly. As regards Punjab, where the Muslim League has won the largest number of seats, it is so because the people of Punjab

reposed confidence in the leadership of the Muslim League. However, the recent election has further enhanced the prestige of the Prime Minister in the eyes of the people. The enhanced prestige of Mr. Junejo will definitely benefit the ruling party if elections are held in 1990. It's a big "if", but the possibility of holding elections in 1990 cannot be altogether ruled out as well.

In order to rule the country and run the administration effectively, President Zia-ul-Haq had formed a team of able and experienced men like Lieut General K.M. Arif, Mr. Ghulam Ishaq Khan, General Mujib-ur-Rehman, Mr. Agha Shahi and Dr. Mahboob-ul-Haq. Prime Minister Junejo too has rallied round him men of exceptional ability and vast experience. In bureaucracy, he has placed seasoned men like Captain Isani, Messers Massod-uz-Zaman and Hasan Zaheer at the helm of affairs. Similarly, he has inducted into his cabinet highly experienced and sagacious politicians such as Qazi Abdul Majeed Abid and dedicated as well as sparkling men like Mr. Nasim Aheer. In the person of Finance Minister, Mr. Mohammad Yaseen Wattoo, the Prime Minister has got another gem.

But despite all the achievements of the Prime Minister, there exists a fundamental difference between him and the President. General Zia did enjoy the support of the army. He still enjoys the same. So long as he is in the good books of the army generals, he is absolutely safe. On the other hand, Prime Minister Junejo is a representative of people. His real force springs from the masses. He is so simple and conscientious that during all the period of the tenure of his office stretching over more than three years, he neither tried to be popular among the masses on the basis of his selfless service nor did his own partymen ever bother to form his image. The Prime Minister should have perhaps avoided his image-building lest his increasing popularity in the masses should create doubts in the mind of the President. It is because of this fact that the President is still the real key to power: the Prime Minister is nothing but a shadow.

Mr. Mohammad Khan Junejo is not only the Premier of the country, he is also the President of the Muslim League as bequeathed by the Quaid-e-Azam. In that capacity too, his achievement does not appear much significant. There too, he has not tried

to make the Muslim League a vigorous and active organisation. He has not taken pains to infuse new life into the party nor has he adopted any such techniques which make a political party attractive. On the other hand, he has entrusted the affairs of the party to such men who are completely devoid of mental prowess, motivating force and sense of duty towards the nation. Ever since his assumption of office of the President, the Muslim League has failed to present any such manifesto which might have been deemed something thought-provoking and inspiring or it would have opened new vistas of life for the teeming millions. I am not saying about the laxity of the Premier that he has not so far been able to give a sense of direction to the nation; he has not bothered about giving to the masses animating and heart-warming slogans which would have at least filled their hearts with fond hope. Therefore, the Muslim League appears to have no bright future. But suppose if it manages to attain victory in the coming elections of 1990, it will find itself in the most formidable situation. Filled against 100 million exploited and oppressed people, the Muslim League will have in its rank and file landlords, industrialists, capitalists and all those self-seekers to whom the interests of the common man matter the least. In that case, it can only form the government, but in no way it can change the destiny of people. As the President of Muslim League, Mr. Junejo should also not forget the fact that he is the successor of that Mohammad Ali Jinnah who had transcended the barriers of sectarianism and provincialism. Jinnah was not merely the idle breaker of these evils, he had rallied round him the Muslims of the entire Sub-continent on a single platform.

In fact, the political parties formed on the sectarian basis or the greatest obstruction to the restoration of that atmosphere which prevailed during the Pakistan Movement period. As the President of the Muslim League, if premier Junejo endears the integrity and solidarity of this nation, he should take a bold step and get a law a law enacted by the Parliament under which all such political parties like Jamat-e-Islami, Jamiat-e-Ulma-e-Islam, Jamiat-e-Ulma-e-Pakistan, Shia Political Party and Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqah-e-Jafarya be banned. Even the formation of a party on the sectarian basis be declared as a punishable criminal offence. Beyond doubt, this task was comparatively much easier when President Zia, as the

Chief Martial Law Administrator, was preparing the frame-work for regulating the political parties. At that time, some upright men had urged him to do so. But alas! he took no heed of it.

There is no denying the fact that family background has much of its influence on the development of personality. Training too plays its important role. President Zia-ul-Haq was born in a puritan family. He was the son of a Moulvi. Therefore, so puritanic he became that, to quote his own words, he used to attend school and college in the British days by wearing "Shalwar and Kameez". During the early period of his service, whenever his Commanding Officer needed to summon President Zia, he sent a person to a mosque where the latter was generally found.

The real problem in our society is that we consider only that person God-fearing and good who makes a particular type of appearance or adopts a conventional life-style. At the same time, he clings to his own faith which he has inherited and denounces men of other faiths as "Kaafirs". In addition to that, he starts considering customs and traditions as the invaluable part of religion while the fact is that Islam has nothing to do with the local customs and traditions.

However, whereas President Zia-ul-Haq's impressionistic mind was considerably influenced by his puritanic upbringing, he also looked with open eyes at the other side of life, especially during his different postings within and outside the country. There too, his perceptions did n't go without impressions. This contrast did create a cleavage in his mind. The result was that he became a dual personality. In the psychological term, such a person is also called 'a splitted personality'.

For his very many achievements and success in life, although he has been graciously eulogising the role of his wife, in my considered opinion, the real cause of his success was his father who, by his noble act, earned the favour of God. The result was that Almighty Allah elevated his son to such an enviable position.

To my mind, there has been no well thought-out scheme or plan on his part in either being the Chief of Army Staff or the President of the country. Both the positions were bestowed upon him as a divine boon. This is the reason that during 8 years of his absolute power as the President of the country and despite all his sincerity as

well as uprightness, he could not make any solid or substantial contribution. His entire era of rule is marked by the lack of revolutionary programme and remarkable achievements. As he became the President of the country under certain objective conditions, therefore he did not try to change the course of events but preferred to change himself according to the course of events.

Even in matters pertaining to Islam, the knowledge of President Zia was not beyond the rudiments of prayer and pilgrimage. This was the main reason that a common man remained unconcerned and the enforcement of Islam in the country produced no tangible results. When General Zia-ul-Haq was introducing the "Nizam-e-Salaat", a foreign high-ranking diplomat asked me what step he was going to take next. I replied that it was the last nail which he had put to raise the canopy of Islam.

As said earlier, President Zia's entire period of rule has unfortunately been marked by the lack of any significant achievement in all walks of life. Besides this major drawback, there are men, including his admirers, who often criticise him for certain lapses. The biggest charge levelled against President Zia is that he is the person who put Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on the gallows. Secondly, the corruption of bribery reached its extreme limits during his reign and he took no proper measures either to curb or uproot it. He himself has, on some occasions, admitted the fact that bribery has been rampant in our society. Thirdly, it is during his period of rule that the menace of drug mafia has alarmingly reached its magnitude. Further, the irony is that some of the top-notchers of the country are seemingly involved in the promotion of this evil. Fourthly, President Zia promised the nation to hold general elections within 90 days of the imposition of Martial law; but in utter violation of his own promise and on the sheer pretext of the objective conditions, he has been ruling the country for more than 10 years. Fifthly, through his manipulations, he has not only weakened but enormously damaged the political parties. Sixthly, it was during his reign that the orgy of sectarianism, communalism and provincialism raised its ugly head. As a result of it, there was much of blood-shed. Lastly, he patronised his own brand of faith on the government level. So far as the question of the promise of holding elections within 90 days and delaying them till 7 years is concerned,

its entire responsibility did not rest on President Zia-ul-Haq alone. In my opinion, more than Zia-ul-Haq, the responsibility lay on those political leaders who had a fear that in case the Peoples' Party came to power again, it would initiate the process of revenge and then they would not be spared. Those political leaders, therefore, entreated Zia-ul-Haq, with their folded hands, not to hold elections. Those leaders had not the least regard for the well being of the nation, but for their own personal safety and petty interests, they begged a military dictator to postpone the elections. In view of their yester record, they have no right today to demand for a mid-term election. To quote a couplet of Mirza Ghalib:

کے کسر منہ سے جاؤ گے غالب
شرم تم کو مگر نہیں آتی

"With your misdeeds, how dare you will
visit Kaaba! O Ghalib!"

A great champion of religion who is also a political leader once objected as to why President Zia-ul-Haq smokes cigarettes of foreign brand. To his objection, the President quipped, "I am going to give up smoking foreign brand of cigarettes, but you too abjure chewing imported 'pan-leaf'." Zia-ul-Haq, as is said, subsequently gave up smoking cigarettes but the lips of that great leader are reddish to this day. How can that man be a leader who cannot do away with a wasteful habit in which foreign exchange is also involved? How can such a man be expected to lead the nation when he cannot make even such a small sacrifice?

Some political leaders also came in the way of elections so as to keep enjoying the economic gains which they had been receiving from the GHQ. That political leader who wrote letters to the military generals, inviting them to assume power, how can he now talk of elections? Has he got any moral courage to press for the elections? Further, some of these political leaders strenghened the hands of a military dictator against late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who was after all a politician. In a country where the political leaders are so short-sighted, a military general is justified in ruling the country.

As regards the sectarian hatred, its increase much suited Zia-ul-Haq because this was the method through which he could please

Saudi Arabia. It was with the blessings of Saudi Arabia that he could directly or indirectly gain the favour of America. So far as the bribery and drug mafia are concerned, although Zia-ul-Haq himself is much above board and his personal integrity is not involved, nevertheless he has not tried to change the state of affairs. It's perhaps his strategy to keep the things intact. Further, in the capital punishment of late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, President Zia only acted as a dagger. The hand which held the dagger was the hand of Jimmy Carter. Bhutto's blood was shed not only with the collusion of those political leaders who were his arch enemies but with the approbation of some of his supporters who were often seen in his company with smiling faces.

The most striking quality of President Zia is that despite being the absolute ruler of a sovereign nation, he leads a simple and unostentatious life. He is also an iconoclast in the sense that he has shattered the idols of certain traditions which had been set by the Imperialists but our own rulers had steadfastly upheld them. Whenever a delegation of people calls on him, he always goes to the main gate of Presidency to see off his visitors. This act too is against the protocol which the President is supposed to maintain. He also gets mingled with people in public ceremonies. Further, he meets the functionaries of the State in the President House in such a way that he is attired in a tattered 'kurta' and is playing with the children of his family. He pays respect even to an ordinary man. His food is generally frugal and if you are dining with him, you will have to think several times whether or not you are sitting and dining with the Head of a state. If his attendant happens to falter and the soup the dish is spilled over him, he does not care a fig. There is no denying the fact that he professes Wahabi faith and belongs to the Najadi School of thought, but it's equally true that when he enters the mausoleum of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), he weeps bitterly too.

But this is one side of the picture. His love and reverence for the Holy Prophet is beyond doubt and unbounded. But never has his heart throbbed for the love of Hazrat Ali. Such is his apathy to that great hero of Islam that during his entire reign stretching over a long span of time, he has never uttered the name of Hazrat Ali (A.S.) in any public meeting or private discourse. His wife who is the First

Lady of Pakistan, holds Mehfil-e-Milaad in the President House with all solemnity. There too, Hazrat Ali (A.S.) is off the scene. President Zia has never participated in any of the functions held under the auspices of Shia organisations nor has he ever attended the funeral prayer of a Shia dignitary. Whenever he speaks of Allah or His prophet or narrates a pathetic tale, his throat gets choked and his eyes are also moistened with tears. But at the same time if he realises his authority is challenged, he feels no qualm of conscience in killing five thousand or even twenty five thousand people. On the other hand, in his personal capacity, he becomes restless on an individual's miseries.

One is very likely to come across such glaring contradictions in each and every aspect of his life. The religious scholars who rank after God and His Prophet, it is their favour he always wishes to win. His wife who is also a God-fearing lady and who is equally enthusiastic in serving the cause of God, never lags behind her husband in showering bounties on the religious scholars. In the President House there do exist most luxurious wash basins. These wash basins may very easily be used for the ablution purposes. But when the President invites the 'moulvis', he is so much careful for them that he makes a special arrangement of 25 or 50 plastic pots for them lest such 'moulvis' who don't ablute with any other thing except pots, should get displeased.

The greatest merit of President Zia is that he has much toleration for the most scathing and pungent criticism against him. Instead of showing any displeasure, he receives every such criticism with a smiling face. I have very often noticed in different meetings and conferences that people are passing extremely pinching remarks against him and his policies, but he is not the least hurt by any such remark. It appears that the President's chair is not occupied by a person who is made of flesh and blood but by an idol made of stone. With the passage of time, the stone-idol too is affected by the extremities of weather, but the President's face gives no such impressions. Once a 'moulvi' of Sukkur scolded him in his speech and called him a 'Qadyani'. Some flatterers asked the President to get him immediately arrested. He instantly replied, "Leave the matter. He is scolding me. When I myself am not taking it ill, why are you feeling like that?"

Another merit of General Zia-ul-Haq is the restoration of power to the Prime Minister. He got the elections held and revived the democratic system. This is his real achievement, considering his position as a person vested with absolute powers. Beyond doubt, he is a military general, but the way he has dealt a blow to an eminent politician who happens to be his potential rival, it's really praiseworthy. Further, within the ten years of his rule, he has groomed himself as an expert on the foreign affairs. This is the reason that on the one hand he is openly providing every sort of assistance to the Afghan Mijahideen, but on the other hand, the trade of Pakistan with U.S.S.R. is also expanding. Besides the ever-increasing volume of trade with that country, cultural relations too are being strengthened. So superbly grand is his foreign policy that despite the utmost pressure of America and Saudi Arabia, he has not involved Pakistan with Iran-Iraq war and has succeeded in maintaining neutrality. Pakistan considers brotherly Iran as its close friend, yet she has very good relations with Iraq. On one occasion in the last days President Zia said, though in a subdued tone, that after the ouster of the Shah of Iran, Pakistan and not Saudi Arabia had the best right to protect the American interests in the region. In the utterance of the said sentence his voice was subdued because perhaps his own faith and close connection with Saudi Arabia impeded him for a while.

If Pakistan is compelled to woo America for her friendship, then this friendship should be cultivated directly and not through any third party. In fact, close friendship with America is in the best interests of Pakistan. After all, America herself believes in freedom of faith and freedom of self-expression. That country is not going to deprive anyone of us of freedom of faith and freedom of self-expression. On the contrary, friendship with U.S.S.R. makes no such guarantee.

Another great merit of President Zia is his visit of India which is indeed a historic achievement. When Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, had massively deployed his army on our borders to exert pressure on Pakistan so as to keep this country away from siding with the oppressed people of Afghanistan, President Zia rushed to Bangalore where the cricket Test Match was going to be played between India and Pakistan. He met Mr. Rajiv Gandhi

and prevailed on him for the cessation of hostilities between the two countries. Thus, he initiated the 'cricket diplomacy'. It was also a painful fact that Mr. Rajive Gandhi tried his best to disgrace the President, but not minding the affront and caring least for his personal ego, General Zia outwitted the Indian as well as the Russian rulers.

Had President Zia not been so staunch in his own brand of faith, and had he not used his official position for it, he would have been perhaps the most popular leader in the country. Viewing his love for Islam, almost every Head of a Department, whether government or semi-government, got a mosque constructed. The Head of a certain Department spent crores of rupees in building scores of mosques. A Deputy Martial Law Administrator got a mosque constructed on a hillock in front of the K.D.A. Rest House. Ten million rupees were spent on its construction. So long as that DMLA remained in his office, ten to fifteen persons offered their daily prayers there. They too went there to please that DMLA. After his relinquishing the post, the number of persons lowered to four or five. All these mosques were built to seek the favour of God and His Prophet or this huge amount of money was wasted to please the President. The real intention is known to God and God alone. The fact is that more than mosques, this country needs educational institutions, hospitals and buildings for utilitarian purposes. Institutions of utilitarian value are the pressing need of the moment. Just as a hospital plays its important role in keeping a nation physically and mentally sound, similarly an educational institution helps a lot in producing rational and enlightened minds. As a matter of fact, no mind encrusted with ignorance and superstition, can acquire knowledge and cognition about God. I would once again like to draw your kind attention to the past history. It was due to his liberal and enlightened religious policy that Akbar, the Great had been able to forge unity among all sects and religions existing in the Sub-continent. That unity not only lent dignity and grace to the monarch's personality, but it helped a good deal in giving permanence and long life to the Moghul Empire itself. What Akbar had earned by his prudence, Aurangzeb unfortunately lost by his fanaticism.

President Zia and all those who are at the helm of affairs should realise that people try to give a colouring to every custom and

tradition in such a way that it may appear nothing but sanctified. In their considered opinion, real religion lies only in the worship of past. Such men remain adhered to the past. Impervious to reason and logic as they are, they cannot see beyond their nose. It is therefore but natural that such type of men are opposed to every novelty and change. The fact is that change is the 'law of nature'. But instead of accepting novelty and allowing it to flourish in the society, they throttle it. The best weapon that these obscurantists possess, is to declare every such thing as "kufr". This ostrich-like attitude is nothing but an escape. That's why the Muslims have been backward in many walks of life.

Religion and past customs are two different things. It's indeed a big mistake if one deems both the things as one and the same. Instead of giving due importance to the tenets of Islam, we try to lay much emphasis on the customs and rituals which are but the external forms of our social life and these forms keep on changing with the passage of time. Those who regard cultural and historical relics as well as ancestral faith as religion, perhaps don't know that none can arrest the pace of time. Time is nothing but motion and change. The poet-philosopher of East, Allama Iqbal, was very right when he said:

ثبات، ایک تغیر کو ہے رٹانے میں

"Immutable are the changes in this world."

In fact, time has the power to impede all barriers. You may go through the history of the Turkish monarchy which was founded in the name of the Caliphate. The period of Sultan Ahmad's rule ranges between 1707 and 1730. During that period when Saeed Mohammad set up a press in collaboration with Ibrahim Mutafraga in 1727, the Muslim scribes clamoured that Islam was in danger. The fact was that it was the means of livelihood of the scribes that had become at stake. But the Sheikh-ul-Islam pronounced a decree that it was blasphemous to get the Holy Quran or a book on traditions, exegesis or jurisprudence printed in the press. Only the Jews and the Christians were permitted to use the press. Subsequently, when the Sultan tried to use the press for the print of

books on pure and social sciences of his time, the Muslim clergies launched a revolt against him. As a result of that revolt, Sultan Ahmad had to abdicate. Previously in 1528, when Sultan Mahmood-II had tried to establish a medical college by recruiting doctors from Austria, the Muslim clergies declared surgery as forbidden in Islam. Their plea was that since surgery dealt with autopsy, and the post-mortem of the dead bodies was not permitted in Islam, therefore surgery was definitely a subject to be shunned.

Deplorable are indeed some pages of the Muslim history. But every Muslim, especially the ruler, who sincerely wishes to bring a happy change in the society, should necessarily go through these pages. Each new era has in its wake a radical change but every new order should be a continuation and not a complete departure from the old order. Unless there is a harmony between the old and the new order, the society or the nation suffers. It degenerates soon and gets either enslaved or split into many parts.

The laws of Nature are eternal. Nature has the capacity to test every thing on its touch-stone and, while doing so, it makes no distinction of caste, creed and colour. Further, it's inherent objectivity makes no allowance for likes and dislikes. One who clashes with Nature, gets smashed. Islam is not merely a religion of customs and rituals, it's fundamentally a way of life which is very close to Nature. Unless and until we recognise this fact, we cannot get over the predicament that we are unfortunately placed in.

SECULAR BEHAVIOUR

(This chapter was written by the author
on 6.5.1988)

In my last article I had plainly stated that in the whole Quran, words like 'System', 'Law' and 'Ideology', were nowhere employed in their strict technical sense and relationship with Islam. At only one place, Islam is comprehensively defined where God quoths in the following words:

30. So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright - the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He hath created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتِ
اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ
لِحُكْمِ اللَّهِ

In the Arabic language, the word "Fatra" means 'to invite' or 'to make'. In the Holy Book, God has used this word for Himself. He says that He is "the Creator of the sky and the earth". Similarly, in Verse no. 79 of Surah Inam, there exists the divine injunction meaning thereby that 'He created the Sky and the Earth'. In Arabic, the phrase "Fatirat-il-Lah" connotes the meaning as 'the divine way' or 'the disposition of God'. In its another shade of meaning, the word "Fitrat" also means 'Nature'. Such is the law that Nature is ever-changing and it is governed by the process of evolution.

Each moment, this process keeps on going: it never gets static or bogged down. Truly speaking, Nature is like an unbounded sea; and being limitless in its scope, it shall continue to function till eternity. That's why Allama Iqbal, an eminent poet, said:

یہ کائنات ابھی نامتلا ہے شاید
کہ آ رہی ہے نہ تمام صدائے کن فیکون

Complete is not perhaps the Universe as yet,
Echoes of 'to be' and 'done' are constant.

To make conscious of the same universality and limitless expanse of nature and to keep each moment the impulse of ingenuity and discovery intact, God says in Verse no. 27 of Surah 'Luqman':

27. And if all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea, with seven more seas to help it (were ink), the words of Allah could not be exhausted. Lo! Allah is Mighty, Wise.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ مَالِيَ الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرٍ أَزْدَادُ
وَالْبَحْرُ مِلَّةٌ مِنْ بَعْدِ السَّبْعِ أَظْهَرُ
مَا نَقِذْتُ كَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ
حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

In other words, the Almighty invites man to be ever inquisitive and to know all that which comes under the purview of social and pure sciences. He also wishes that man should develop this rational, intellectual, educational and cognitive faculties. Each moment, He impels man to do what Allama Iqbal has expressed in the following couplet:

اے موج! آبِ بڑھ کے ہو دریائے تند و تیز
سامل تجھے عطا ہو تو سامل نہ کر قبول

Surge O wave!, accelerate river's pace,
Keep on dashing, come not to the coast.

Thus, the real spirit of Islam is that one should incessantly strive to discover new horizons of knowledge, intellect and cognition. This constant search is indeed the only means through which one can know about God. Knowledge of God is only possible when one

has implicit faith in His existence and undying love for the Holy Prophet as well as his progeny. At the same time, one should also possess sufficient knowledge of philosophy and logic. One who denies the importance and usefulness of philosophy and logic, verily exhibits his own ignorance. Mulla Sadruddin Mohammad Shirazi fully corroborates with this idea in his famous book entitled "Asfara Arba". According to him, reflection on the secrets of nature or meditation over matters of vital importance is nothing short of a prayer. The Holy Quran itself says in Verse no. 191 of Surah 'Al-e-Imran':

191. Such as remember Allah, standing, sitting, and reclining, and consider the creation of the heavens and the earth, (and say): Our Lord! Thou createdst not this in vain. Glory be to Thee! Preserve us from the doom of Fire!

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا
وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ
فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا
مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ
عَذَابَ النَّارِ

In the same context, Imam Hasan Askari (A.S.) says that the best prayer is not in bowing down the head but in deep reflections on the secrets of the creation of earth and sky. Islam too has presented such a concept about the oneness of God who is Omnipresent but has no particular or permanent place. To quote Prof. Muzaffar's couplet:

باقی ہے اس طرح کہ کہیں بھی عدم نہیں
موجود ہر جگہ ہے، کہیں بھی قدم نہیں

By Thy absence, marked is no place,
Thou exists everywhere, but with no trace.

At the same time, God in His infinite wisdom, has instilled in man an urge to seek His favour and this urge remains alive at every stage of his life. The following couplet sums up this idea:

ہم کو یوں در در پھرایا یار نے
لامکان میں گھر بنا یا یار نے

In His quest, we wandered far and wide,
Limitless is His abode for Him to hide.

In short, had there been any set system or codified law in Islam, it would have neither emerged as a universal religion nor would have lasted for such a long time. Honestly speaking, a system or a constitution is a product of its objective conditions and these conditions keep on changing with the passage of time. Every 'present' is revolting against its 'past'; and each system of the past is replaced by the present system. Similarly, from the ashes of the old constitution, every new constitution is born. Therefore, the very existence of Islam for the last fourteen hundred years is a glaring evidence that it is not a system but a way of life. Islam is indeed the only religion which has a complete code of life. The Law of Nature demands that life should move ahead: it should never revert. But contrary to this fundamental law, we have been trying for the last several hundred years to hold the clock back. By doing it, we are in fact doing great injustice to Islam.

Since human nature is essentially in accordance with the spirit of Islam, therefore, the Quran does not speak of any particular tribe, race or nation. It addresses man and man alone. For instance, the following Verse of the Holy Quran is significant in this context:

4. Surely We created man of the best stature.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

God says again in Verse no. 70 of Surah 'Bani-Israel':

70. Verily We have honoured the children of Adam.

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ

Yet, in Verse no. 6 of Surah 'Al-Infetar', the divine injunction is as follows:

6. O man! What hath made thee careless concerning thy Lord, the Bountiful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ اذْكُرْ لَوْ رَدُّكَ الْكَرِيمِ

Before moulding man, He took the collective consent of the entire human race, thereby seeking the approbation of all the would-be-created human beings regarding His existence and Oneness. The Holy Quran relates the event in the following words of Verse no. 171-172 of Surah 'Araf':

172. And (remember) when thy Lord brought forth from the Children of Adam, from their reins, their seed, and made them testify of themselves (saying): Am I not your Lord? They said: Yea, verily We testify.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا ۖ

In the Book of God, there appears the divine injunction again. To quote Surah 'Rahman':

3. He hath created man.

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ۖ

4. He hath taught him.

عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ۖ

In the same way, with regard to the respect of human blood, He commands in the following words:

that whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind

أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ نَسَافٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا ۖ

Thus, God teaches man of the sanctity of human blood. In the light of the teachings of Islam, only two persons in the whole of Pakistan can at present be regarded as models. One of them is Maulana Sattar Edhi and the other is Mr. Ansar Burni.

Beyond doubt, humanity is the very essence of the teachings of Islam. In other words, the best Muslim is he who is also the best human being. Whether a ruler or an ordinary citizen, one should not make any discrimination of caste, creed and colour in his dealings with others. As a matter of fact, one should deal with men purely on human plane. Only this way, one can do justice which is the very foundation of the structure of Islam. In Surah "Walzuhaha", it is clearly stated:

9. Therefore the orphan oppress not,

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ۖ

10. Therefore the beggar drive not away,

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ۖ

In this Verse, there exists no such distinction that if an orphan is a Muslim, treat him gently; but if he is a non-muslim, treat him otherwise. Similarly, there is either no such command that if the beggar is your co-religionist or that he belongs to your caste and creed, give him alms; but if he has no such affiliation, give him a cold shoulder. In the eyes of Islam, an orphan is after all an orphan and a beggar is only a beggar. His colour, caste or creed is immaterial.

There is a tradition in Sahi Bokhari's 'Kitab-ul-Taabeer' that addressing his companions, the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) once said, "Your children, dying young, shall straightway go to Heaven". The companions asked "And the children of the infidels?" He answered "Their children too". About those who are asked to be treated gently, the foremost among them rank the relatives. There are different kinds of relationship. The first kind is that kinship where blood is common between father and son, brother and sister, uncle and nephew, etc. Another relationship is established on the basis of law in which wife and her relatives become knit together. Yet another bondage is of religious nature. All the Muslims are brethren in faith. But there exists no discrimination for an orphan, a beggar or needy person on the basis of caste, creed and colour. In the eyes of God, an orphan is just an orphan, a beggar only a beggar and a needy person nothing but a needy person irrespective of any consideration of his tribe or faith or the colour of his skin. Allama Shibli Noamani writes in the sixth volume of the "Seerat-un-Nabi":

"The Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) offered alms to a jew family. Ummul Momineen Hazrat Safia (R.A.) offered alms worth thirty thousand dirhams to her two jewish relatives. There is a narrative that Abu Mira (R.A.) Amr bin Maimoon (R.A.) bin Sharjeel helped the Christian priests from the funds of fitra."

Sahib-e-Tarikh-e-Tabri narrates that at the same time when the Companions of the Holy Prophet started dissociating with the non-Muslims on account of religious differences, the 272nd Verse of Surah-e-Baqra came to be revealed upon him:

272. The guiding of them is not thy duty (O Muhammad), but Allah guideth whom He will. And whatsoever good thing ye spend, it is for yourselves,

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ مَا وَثَّقُوا
مِنْ خَيْرٍ وَلَا أَنْفُسَكُمْ

In Masood-e-Hanbal, there exists a tradition of the Holy Prophet:

"None shall be faithful from amongst you until he prefers the same thing for the common people as he does for himself and until he loves human being but for the love of God."

Allam Iqbal has dwelt on the same theme in his following couplet:

خدا کے بندے تو ہیں ہزاروں یوں میں پھرتے ہیں مارے مارے
میں اس کے بندے بنوں گا جس کو خدا کے بندوں سے پیار ہو گا

Wandering to and fro are God's myriad creatures,
I shall be his being who loves God's creatures.

He could therefore be none else but the Prophet of Islam whose very mission of prophethood was the reformation and welfare of the entire mankind. So, he and he alone had the right to address to the whole of humanity. In Surah "Airaff", the divine injunction is as follows:

158. Say (O Muhammad): O mankind! Lo! I am the messenger of Allah to you all - (the messenger of) Him unto whom belongeth the Sovereignty of the heavens and earth.

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ
بِمِثْقَالِ الذِّرَّةِ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ

As Mohammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) was the last Messenger of God for the entire humanity, therefore, it was in the fitness of things that good for mankind should reflect his every act. Beyond doubt, his sermon on the eve of the Conquest of Macca was so much epoch-making that it may even on this day be called

as the Magna Carta of human rights. Addressing the faithful there, the Holy Prophet asserted, "Every human being is descendant of Adam and Adam was moulded out of clay."

There exists an episode in the famous book entitled "Sahih Bokhari" that once the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was going somewhere along with his Companions. On the way, he saw a dead body being carried. He accompanied the pall-bearers. The Companions of the Prophet reminded him that the deceased was a jew. The Apostle of God replied that the jew was after all a human being. Similarly, there runs a narrative in the 'Taarikh Ibne Asaakar' that once the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) was going along a narrow path. He was pacing slowly. Some of his Companions requested him to pace up as prayer-time was approaching. The Prophet answered that it was really difficult for him to be swift-paced because an old man was walking ahead of him. The Companions pleaded that the old man was an infidel. The Prophet instantly replied that even if he was an infidel, he was an old man.

The above cited examples are taken from his life of Madina. During the Meccan period of his life, a female polytheist very often used to ill-treat him. But when she fell ill, the Holy Prophet visited her so as to enquire about her health. This noble example set by the Prophet is in itself a great lesson that even if somebody is a polytheist, he or she should be visited during his or her illness. This is indeed one of the lofty traditions of the Prophet of Islam. I have stated these facts only to impress on you that, in Islam, there exists no place for prejudice narrow-mindedness and bigotry. True Islam is much above such petty considerations. Broadly speaking, man is the main theme of the message which Islam conveys. Verily, in its gospel, there lies the lesson of love, fellow-feeling and dignity of man. Thus, in the phraseology of the modern language, the teachings of Islam may rightly be called the 'Secular Behaviour'.

I have already pointed out that, as a religion, Islam has not much to do with dogmas and rituals. On the other hand, Islam is essentially a natural way of life. That is why it does not advocate for any particular system in any aspect of life. Contrary to it, Islam lays all emphasis on spirit. The obvious reason is that a system changes under certain circumstances or with the passage of time. But the spirit ever retains its freshness and is always prepared to face the worst of ordeals.

As a matter of fact, a society is a group of individuals which is either formed to found a state or to expound an ideology or to practise a system. That is why an individual occupies the utmost importance in a society. Therefore, a society is very like the structure of a building while the individual is its base. Islam too believes in this dictum. This is the reason that it directly addresses to the individuals. In the eyes of Islam, therefore, there is neither any importance of a government nor of any society: the individual and individual alone is of supreme value. It is because of this reason that Islam straightway deals with the individuals. In Surah 'Mulk' the divine command is as follows:

2. Who hath created life and death that He may try you, which of you is best in conduct; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ
أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ①

Again, the Providence says in Surah 'Al-Zalzal':

7. And whoso doeth good an atom's weight, will see it then
8. And whoso doeth ill an atom's weight will see it then.

مَنْ يَعْمَلْ يَجْعَلْ وَنُقَالَ دَرَّةً حَبَابًا ②
يَرَهُ ③
وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ يَجْعَلْ وَنُقَالَ دَرَّةً كَرِيرًا ④

And conveying the happy news to the men of faith, He says in Surah 'Nahl', Verse no. 97:

97. Whosoever doth right, whether male or female, and is a believer, him verily We shall quicken with good life,

مَنْ عَمِلْ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ
مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّاهُ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً ①

Similarly, foretelling about the end of man, God, the Almighty says in 164th Verse of Surah 'Inam':

Each soul earneth only on its own account, nor doth any laden bear another's load.

وَلَا تَنْصِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا
عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ①

In this way, Islam invites every one to (the path of) goodness and also holds every living being responsible for his or her own acts.

It also makes one's conscience as the best judge. Therefore, self-assessment is the way through which one is likely to scrutinize his or her own actions. That is why, conscience is not only gifted to every individual but it is made the inseparable part of one's being, and no other thing can be a better pointer than one's conscience. This philosophy of Islam is all unique and is not to be found in any other 'ism'. As society is the other name of conglomeration of individuals, therefore if every human being makes an assessment of his own deeds each day, the society as a whole can be purged of all evils soon.

Islam stresses much on the behaviour of an individual because good human beings create a good society; when a government is formed in a good society, such a government will automatically be an ideal government. Further, as it is customary, a government wields the absolute and ultimate authority. But this is not the case with Islam. In Islam, the government is neither above criticism nor above censure. In a true Islamic state, each citizen has a right to account for and even take to task the highest government functionaries. There exists the following tradition of the Holy Prophet:

كلکم راع وکلکم مسئول عن رعیتہ

"All of you are rulers, and all of you are accountable to the subject,"

The above cited tradition is too important to be ignored. The Messenger of God (p.b.u.h.) was the knower of all the secrets of Nature; he was the ever-flowing fountain of knowledge and nothing in the whole of universe was hidden from him. Each word he uttered, contained nothing but truth. In fact, each utterance that he made was under the divine injunction. To quote the 3rd and 4th Verses of Surah 'Najm':

3. Nor doth he speak of (his own) desire,

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۖ

4. It is naught save an inspiration that is inspired,

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ۖ

These verses are a sure testimony of the absolute truth which his speech was always packed with. In each of his utterance, there lay the essence of all wisdom. Thus, the Prophet of Islam once said:

"Each one of you is a ruler and each ruler is accountable to his subject."

These were not some of the words which the Prophet of Islam had pronounced but these words contained within them a complete philosophy and way of life. At the same time, these words reflected a well-organised system of administration and government.

Further, these words furnish a cogent proof that in the formation and conduct of a government, every citizen of a state is an equal partner and, therefore, he is also equally accountable. In the language of today, this form of government is called "democracy".

That's why, Syed Kazim Khorasani, a great scholar, regarded democracy as a truly Islamic form of government. Imam Khomeini went a step farther and he pronounced that democracy has got the same relevance with Islam which a child has with its mother. Maulana Hamid Ansari Ghazi has very aptly written on page no. 214 of his book entitled "Islam ka Nizaam-e-Hukumat" that after the collapse of Khilafat-e-Raashida, the lack of accountability was the greatest tragedy in the history of Islam. Dwelling on the same theme, the Maulana has further written that those who have been in power ever since that period till this day, are reprehensible.

In his eminent book named "Al-Ehkaam-ul-Sultania", Imam Abul Hasan Ali-Mawardi writes meaning thereby that out of manifold responsibilities which the office of Caliphate has to shoulder, political responsibility is one of them. About politics, Imam Ibn-e-Timya opines that a government is a sacred trust and its foremost duty is to maintain justice. Therefore, for reviving the Muslim society, it is highly necessary to bring about a change in the feeling and thought of the common man. Those who believe in first grabbing power and then implementing Islam by force and coercion, are the people who merely talk of Islam. But, in their action and method, they try to ape the Communists. Such men have no regard for the happy and eternal traditions of the Holy Prophet. In fact, they are the followers of Stalin and Lenin.

It is primarily because of the reason that such an act is in utter disregard with the actions of the Holy Prophet. Hazrat Mohammad (peace be upon him and his progeny), in his infinite wisdom, knew very well that the Arabs were belligerent by nature and, therefore, they prided in plunder and bloodshed. Taking advantage of this Arab temperament so as to implement Islam, it was also possible that the Messenger of God should have stood at the hillocks of Safa and Marwa and, instead of raising the cry of "There is no god but Allah," he would have invited the Meccans to raise an army for conquering the neighbouring states by way of plunder and loot. After having robbed the neighbouring states of their wealth, he would have subsequently established a vast empire. In that condition, as you know very well, there would have been none at Mecca to oppose him. His worst enemies who had opposed his mission tooth and nail and tortured him severely, would have been his ardent supporters. Then, after the establishment of a vast empire, he would have totally banned idol-worship by a royal decree, shattering thereby the idol into pieces. Had there been any resistance anywhere, it would have been quelled by brute force.

By this method, perhaps Islam might have been easily enforced and the Prophet of Islam would have also been spared of the troubles and difficulties that he had experienced in the accomplishment of his task. But such a type of Islam would have only lasted as long as his empire had existed. With the weakening of the government or the collapse of the empire, Islam too would have been washed away. That was why the Holy Prophet did not first found the state so as to enforce Islam there. Instead, he first inculcated in the minds and hearts of his followers the Islamic values. He also activated the latent faculties of men of his time, the faculties which had been lying dormant for a long time. As a result of it, a new society with high and sublime ideals came into existence and a government was subsequently formed so as to keep the society organised. Therefore, the government was a means and not an end in itself; it was but a corollary and not the basic aim of the creation of the Islamic society.

When we talk of the revival of Islam in the present-day world, we can neither ignore the awe-inspiring personality of Ayatullah Khomeini nor can we lose sight of the epoch-making Iranian Revolution. Many of us have known the Ayatullah ever since his

seeking political asylum in France. Then, after the ouster of the Shahanshah, he came back to Iran to guide his people. But we know nothing about that period stretching over 55 years when the Ayatullah had started his mission at the age of twenty five. During that half a century, along with his devoted disciples, he stirred an awakening through speeches and writings. Beyond doubt, he nurtured new minds and brought about a complete change in the feeling and perception of his followers. With the passage of time, the number of his followers swelled. When minds of men are lit with revolutionary ideals, the most formidable shackles tend to lose their weight; cannons become cold; and blood, oozing from the bullet-riddled chests, provides a material for putting a new record in history. The revolution which was the net result of the ceaseless efforts of half a century and which was a product of unflinching faith as well as unflagging determination, is making a clarion call today that it's not merely a change of government but a change in ideology. Therefore, in its wake, it has a tremendous vigour. In fact, this revolution has affirmed that abiding faith in the existence of God matters the most and religion is yet a vital force. The spirit engendered by the abiding faith in God has made millions of the followers of Ayatullah extremely bold and interpid. Today, big nations and highly organised governments of the world, are quaking. In many nooks and corners of the globe, conspiracies are being hatched to undo the revolution but every such nefarious design is yet thwarted and the pace of revolution is not arrested by any devilish intrigue or plot. Despite a lapse of about a decade, it possesses much of its vitality and freshness. This charisma is due to the reason that the person who was the author of the revolution, leads an utterly simple life. The 'Peacock Throne' has had no attraction for him, nor has he any regard for the exalted position. He doesn't feel shy in inviting the Foreign Minister of a certain country to share with him the frugal food that he is dining.

The main objective of writing these lines is to bring to your kind knowledge that the real problem is not of system but of spirit. Ideology is indeed the motivating force. All the great scholars of Political Science are of confirmed opinion that, in a progressive and dynamic state, the nexus is undoubtedly an ideology and a government is always subservient to it. But such a government which

overshadows an ideology, deals it a big blow. As a result of it, that government too perishes soon. On the other hand, that government which functions under an ideology, not only thrives but it even lends the ideology a good deal of vigour so as to be permanent and lasting.

Our greatest misfortune is that, during the long past of our history stretching over centuries, we have tried to evolve ideologies and formulate laws in the name of Islam. We have vainly tried to do these things only to justify the misdeeds of certain individuals. We hardly realise that by doing so, we are simply wasting our time and energy because the wrong acts of an individual, howsoever great and powerful he might have been during his life-time, can never be righted. The proper way, on the other hand, would have been to judge the actions of men in the light of the set principles and ideology of Islam.

In support of my argument, I am presenting here as an evidence the "blood laws" of the Ottoman rulers of Turkey. During the reign of Mohammad, the Conqueror of Constantinople, all the court priests had unanimously given a verdict that, after having assumed power, the ruler was fully justified if he got his brothers executed for the fear of rivalry and confusion.

The entire history of Islam is replete with hundreds of such decrees. Those decrees were pronounced so as to cajole and please the debauched and corrupt rulers but those devilish decrees were daubed in the colour of Islam only to hoodwink the ignorant masses. The most unfortunate aspect of such malicious decrees is that they were acclaimed to have been in conformity with the injunctions and canons of Islam. Among such infernal decrees was the most abominable verdict of the infamous Qazi Sharih about the assassination of Hazrat Imam Hussain (A.S.), the grandson of the Prophet of Islam, (peace be upon him).

But in these dark dungeons of the Muslim history, there is the glitter of the streaks of light which is sometimes lit by the noble acts of a few illustrious men who remained steadfast and did not budge an inch although they had to face the worst of trials and tribulations. Imam Malik (R.A.) was among such luminaries. He considered the 'forced divorce' not only apathetic but absolutely unlawful. His opinion was based on the tradition of the Holy Prophet. Therefore, in the light of that tradition, he deduced the result that the 'forced

allegiance' of Mansoor that the ruler contrived to his advantage, had no legal sanctity. As 'forced allegiance' tantamounted to the 'forced divorce', the claim of Mansoor to rule the Muslims was not therefore valid in the eyes of Maalik. However, Maalik (R.A.) earned the displeasure of the Caliph, he suffered the most severe punishment at the command of the ruler but even in the most trying situation, his feet did not falter, and he refused to compromise on the stand which he had taken.

Another example is of Shah Waliullah. On page 214 of the book entitled "Tehrik-e-Afkaar-o-Siyasat-e-Islami", the compiler has written that Waliullah neither approved monarchy nor did he consider just the succession of a prince to the throne. It was for his opposition of monarchy that he was also branded by a host of paid (ulemas) religious scholars as an infidel. When the Holy Quran was first printed in the press, the printers too were called as infidels. Similarly, when Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah led the Pakistan Movement, he was branded as "Kaafir-e-Azam". But the irony is that such men claim today that they were not only the protagonists of Islam but the creators of Pakistan as well.

Further, there are scores of decrees of the Deobandis pronounced against the Bralevs and of the Bralevs against the Deobandis. Similarly, Sunni scholars have very often called the Shiite Muslims as renegades and vice versa. I can reproduce here the exact texts of those decrees with the names of all those who contrived them. But since I don't want my readers to have a bad taste, I shall not do so. However, if these decrees are compiled and published, what impression will they create? What will become of the Muslim Umma? Or, God forbid, will it be a Muslim nation with an overwhelming majority of the non-believers? In that case, what will be the percentage of the real Muslims? At the same time, what will be the criterion of calling a person a Muslim?

In my considered opinion, the Messenger of God had enriched the Muslims with the treasure-house of faith. He had also instructed his followers to enrich others with this wealth all over the world. But alas! how mean we have become that instead of making the poor rich, we are trying to impoverish all those who share this richness. Have we ever tried to search our hearts and think seriously as to why we have engaged ourselves in sheer mud-slinging? We also don't know as to how long we shall continue to do so.

There is no denying the fact that during the last forty years of our independence, we have unfortunately perpetrated such disgraceful acts, each of which is a misnomer and a slur in the fair name of Islam. But, to my mind, three despicable acts whose mention is made below, are not only stunning but unforgettable too.

Against the Bhutto regime, when the Nizam-e-Mustafa Movement was at its highest peak, an enraged crowd besieged the house of Allah Banda, a worker of the People's Party. The crowd asked him to remove the party flag from his house. Allah Banda was not ready to meet that demand. Emotionally heated as the crowd was, a boy climbed over the roof of Allah Banda's house so as to do away with the flag. The People's Party worker too could not resist his anger and, therefore, he fired at the boy. The crowd got further enraged and attacked his house. Allah Banda ran away from his house. The crowd chased him. However, he was caught near Firdous Cinema at Liaquatabad, about a mile away from his house. People assaulted him with all fury and with whatever weapons they had possessed. In a sad plight as Allah Banda was, he collapsed and was about to breathe his last. This incident occurred either in the month of May or June. In hot weather, one usually feels more thirsty. Secondly, one also feels thirsty while running. Thirdly, the state of fear and consternation also provokes thirst. Lastly, a dying person demands water. All the four conditions got combined in the case of Allah Banda. He felt desperately thirsty. With each passing movement, his demand for water grew more and more. But none from among the multitudinous crowd offered him a glass of water. Allah Banda's thirst remained unsatiated. Suddenly, a person with a long beard and with the outward appearance of a devout Muslim, came forward. Instead of providing water, he urinated into the mouth of the victim of the aggression. After a few moments, Allah Banda died.

Whenever I remember that gruesome incident, I really start shuddering. I thank God that General Zia-ul-Haq took over the reins of government, otherwise one can very well imagine about the state of affairs in this country. Had men like that fanatic been at the helm of affairs, what crimes would have been committed in the name of religion. Those who were waging a war for the revival of Nizam-e-Mustafa, presented such a poor account of their character and had

not the least regard either for the teachings of the Holy Quran or for the Messenger of God.

Another incident is that, in a locality of Karachi, an accursed person happened to lay a newly-born babe into the dust-bin which was lying close to a mosque. People conveyed the news about the presence of the baby to the mullah of the mosque. The moulvi became so highly indignant that he asked people to stone the infant to death. He gave the verdict that since the child was a product of sin, therefore it deserved to be destroyed; the sooner, the better. That poor innocent creature was instantly done to death. In no book of Islamic Jurisprudence nor in any sect of Islam, there exists any punishment for the child who is born of illegitimate relationship between a man and a woman. The punishment is always for the man and the woman who have committed adultery.

The third incident relates about the dead body of a woman that was buried in the graveyard of the Steel Mills. After a few days of the burial, it was discovered that the deceased woman was a Qadyani. As soon as the information was received, a mullah, accompanied by some fanatics, reached the spot, undid the grave, dragged the corpse out of the grave and threw it on the ground. What a blasphemous act indeed! Either that dead body should have not been allowed to be buried there; but when its burial has taken place, it should have not been desecrated in that way. Such an unholy act should neither be acceptable to God nor to His Messenger.

The real purpose of relating these incidents is to bring to your knowledge that on account of our own ignorance and narrow-mindedness, how much fun we have made of the noble and lofty teachings of Islam. We are still clinging to the evils of hatred, prejudice, petty-mindedness and oppression for whose eradication Islam had come as a beacon-light.

How great and lovable were those religious scholars when Pakistan had come into being! During their days, there didn't exist any sectarian prejudices nor any kind of hatred. Of that period, notable religious scholars were such as Aqai Mirza Mehdi Poya, Sheikh Mohammad Shariati, Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani, Maulana Abdul Hamid Badayuni, Maulana Ehtishamul Haq Thanvi, Mufti Mohammad Shafi, Allama Rashid Turabi, Allama Ibne Hasan Jarchvi, Maulana Yusuf Binnori, Maulana Nasir Jalali

and Allama Saeed Kazmi, etc. All those scholars were men of great learning during their times. They were also great advocates of the schools of thought which they had represented. But they played no part in getting the copies of the Holy Quran burnt nor did they ever try to get a mosque attacked and desecrated nor did they brand anyone as an infidel. Those were indeed great luminaries which have unfortunately now ceased to emit lustre. After their death, light too appears to have gone out and noble feelings such as love, forbearance, sacrifice, tolerance have come to a naught.

The misleading definition of Islam that we have unfortunately got at the moment is to throttle every novelty of thought and freedom of expression. At the same time, we are made to believe that the Islamic way of life is nothing but an absolute barren life where there is a vast expanse of desert alone. It is completely devoid of verdure, flower, fragrance and zephyr. Further, in the domain of Islam, search for new horizons is forbidden, and there are no new dawns. On this aspect, I shall try to throw light in the third article.

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CLOSENESS TO NATURE

(This chapter was written by the author
on 27.7.1988)

As said earlier, words such as 'System', 'Law' and 'Ideology' were nowhere used in the whole of Quran. However, in the Book of God, there exists a complete and comprehensive definition of Islam in Verse No. 30 of Surah Rome.

30. So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright - the nature (framed) of Allah, in which He hath created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ
اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ
لِفِطْرِ اللَّهِ

This verse reveals that Islam is akin to Nature and Nature is each moment changing and evolutionary. That is why Islam, in its essence, does not believe in stagnation. It always invites each and every human being to meditate and to reflect upon the secrets of Nature. In consonance with the true spirit of Islam, the last Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his progeny) kept on inviting people to deep meditations throughout his life. As a narrative goes, when after a night-sleep, the Holy Prophet was awake, he said, "Tonight a verse is revealed to me. Accursed is he who reads it and doesn't think over it. He who acts not, is accursed twice and thrice."

Then he uttered the following verse which presently constitutes a part of Surah-e-Baqr:

164. Lo! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of night and day, and the ships which run upon the sea with that which is of use to men, and the water which Allah sendeth down from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and dispersing all kinds of beasts therein, and (in) the ordinance of the winds, and the clouds obedient between heaven and earth: are signs (of Allah's sovereignty) for people who have sense.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَاجْتِزَاءِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلِ
الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ
النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ
مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ
وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسْتَتِرِ
بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ
لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

The repeated utterances of this verse by the Prophet of Islam, inviting the people to deep reflections, is a cogent proof what an important place intellect and reasoning occupy in Islam. When I talk of the importance of reason and logic in Islam, I never mean that the fundamentals of Islam such as Tauheed, Nabuwat and Qayamat should be made open to free discussion. I say so because, in the first place vain discussions about the existence of God or occurrence of Doomsday lead one to nowhere and it is nothing but an exercise in futility. But if we start reflecting over the secrets of Nature with a firm and unflinching faith in the existence of God, in the last Prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), in the existence of angels, in the Holy Quran as the last and final Divine message and in the occurrence of Doomsday, we can reach definite conclusions regarding the secrets of Nature. The firm faith in the existence will help in unfolding in inscrutable and mysterious laws of Nature. Beyond doubt, the entire design and planning of this vast and terrifying universe appears to be based on the 'Oneness of God'. This fact is acknowledged by the eminent and leading scientists of the modern times. Such is the grand design of everything in this universe that it cannot be without a Planner - and a Planner or a Designer who is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent. In the Holy Bible, there is "God said, 'Let there be light, and

there was light." It's not light alone but each and every object of the universe is subjected to His Command. When it has been acknowledged that there exists God who is the Creator of each and every object, then God-worship is in the very scheme of Nature. The 41st Verse of Surah Al-noor testifies this fact:

41. Hast thou not seen that Allah, He it is Whom all who are in the heavens and the earth praise, and the birds in their flight? Of each He knoweth verily the worship and the praise; and Allah is Aware of what they do.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرِ صُفْيٌ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ
صَلَاتَهُ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ مِمَّا
يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

Thus, it is evidenced from the above Verse that from the meanest particle of dust to the most powerful atom - every object which is the creation of God is all the times busy in His worship. Submission to God, is therefore, in the fitness of the scheme of Nature. Man, it is an established fact, is the best and the most wonderful of His creation. As God-worship is deeply implanted in the instinct of each and every object of the universe; man, being a part of it, how can he be immune to it? Alexander Pope, a great English poet, was very true when he said:

Who sees with equal eyes, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

If one possesses penetrating eyes and has a powerful observation, he will perceive that each bud bends before God when it blossoms into a flower; the fragrance of every flower is an evidence of the recognition of God; the Sun and the moon testify their obedience to the command of the Almighty by their regular appearance and disappearance. The rhythm emanating from the ripple of water of the water-falls is nothing but an assertion of God's grace, the impetuosity of sea waves and rustle of leaves are but a clear indication that there does exist a Being who is worthy of being worshipped. Similarly, the thunder in clouds and the appearance of

a rainbow on the horizon with their lovely multi-colour are a sure testimony of a Supreme Power.

But despite all variance and contra-distinction in the phenomena of Nature, there is no conflict. On the other hand, one who has the power to perceive, he will notice that there lies a symmetry of a coherence in the distinction. The symmetry is that each object of Nature is engrossed in worshipping God. The binding force of coherence that underlies the phenomenon of Nature is in fact a lesson for the entire human race, especially for the Muslims. The institution of prayer in Islam is in absolute conformity with the phenomenon of Nature where every object, whether animate or inanimate, is in a state of worshipping God. In the congregation of prayer, all petty distinctions of class, creed and colour pale into nothingness and all hatred for each other evaporates. It becomes a single body of worshippers. To quote Allama Iqbal the poet-philosopher of the East:

ایک ہی صف میں کھڑے ہو گئے خود و ایاز

"Each and every kind of distinction ceased to exist."

As implicit faith in the existence of God is the first and foremost condition for being a Muslim, similarly the Prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is an essential ingredient of faith in Islam. Beyond doubt, he was not only the last Messenger of God but, by virtue of the task assigned to him, he was the greatest and the most exalted. Whereas each prophet was endowed with a single miracle, the number of miracles of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was many and sundry. Whether it was the miracle of bowing down of the branches of the tree in front of the house of Bishop Bohera in honour of the Prophet during his childhood days or the partition of moon into two halves by his mere pointation or pebble reciting Kalma-e-Tayyaba at his sacred palms. But the greatest of all the miracles granted to him was the Holy Quran which is a testament of the greatest value and has been a beacon-light for the Muslims during the last 1,400 years and shall continue to be so till eternity. These miracles reflected that all the objects of Nature and all the phenomena of Nature were under the complete control of the Holy Prophet. Therefore, an implicit faith in the Prophethood of Hazrat Muham-

mad is indeed a vital part of faith in the Divinity. Further, as every material object is advancing towards destruction, therefore the Doomsday will be the corollary and logically sequence of that destruction. The Holy Quran bears testimony to these truths. It does so because it enshrines the eternal and unalterable principles of Nature. To these eternal principles of Nature, we also call 'Natural phenomena' in the English language. Thus, it may also be said that Nature pervades in the entire universe as the moving spirit. In this vast expanse of Nature, man has his entity as a living creature, although his position is supreme. Though much higher on rational level than any of the living creatures, the fact remains that he has many things in common with other living creatures. Therefore, the laws of Nature governing life, cannot be different for man alone. That's why the Divine commandment is:

There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation.

لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ

Therefore, the Laws of Creation have remained the same from Hazrat Adam, the proto-type of man to Hazrat Muhammad, the last Messenger of God. In view of this fact, there exists an injunction of God in the 13th Verse of Sura-e-Shoora:

13. He hath ordained for you that religion which He commended unto Noah, and that which We inspire in thee (Muhammad), and that which We commended unto Abraham and Moses and Jesus, saying: Establish the religion, and be not divided therein.

فَرَعَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَضَىٰ
بِهِ نُوْحًا وَالَّذِي آوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ
وَمَا وَضَيْنَا لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ
وَعِيسَىٰ أَنْ أَقِمُوا دِينَ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا
فِيهِ

From an Arabic word "Shara" another word "Shaare" is derived. According to the grammatical terminology, it is a Noun. It means 'path' or 'road'. In the terminology of Islam, the word "Shariat" means "the way of life which one should adopt in accordance with the dictates of religion." Therefore, the comprehensive definition of Shariat is "the way of life as approved by God" or "the course of life which is natural and beneficial" for all human beings. This is only possible when each and every human being

adopts the prescribed course and not under his whim or fancy. Nature, as is evident, always believes in moderation. It never approves of extremity. That's why life does not exist in such regions which are either intensely hot or severely cold.

As said earlier at several places, Nature is evolutionary and ever-changing. Therefore, the religious way of life cannot be that life which is stagnant and rigid. That mode of life in which all the channels of research and enquiry are blocked, may be anything else but the life as prescribed by religion. As a matter of fact, Islam never approves of blind alleys. That is why there is no room for blind emulation. Honestly speaking, there can't be a greater curse than blind following. That's why the Holy Quran emphasises at very many places on 'meditation' and 'reflection'. This stress is made so that avenues of new thought are ever open and the society is not clogged with retrogression and taboos of the worst kind. In Islam, the spirit of free inquiry and research is very much encouraged. Therefore, in the parlance of religion, such a free inquiry is called "Ijtihad".

Again, Nature appears to be actuated with a harmony. We may call this harmony a 'balance' as well. The life which is governed by the dictates of religion means a 'harmonious' and 'balanced' life. This harmony should be perceptible in all walks of life. It should very well be discernable in love and hatred, in support and opposition, in reward and punishment. As harmony is the very essence of life, therefore it cannot be neglected at any stage. That is why it is an essential part of life and has to be taken care of whether one is in a state of peace or war. In the Holy Quran, the Providence says:

49. Lo! We have created every thing by measure.

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ

If you analyse the above Verse, you will see that in the genesis of the entire creation, harmony was the first and the foremost criterion; and in His scheme of planning, no object whether animate or inanimate, is supposed to go beyond its capacity. If the harmony of that object is disturbed the least, it will lose its shape and properties. For example, water which is extremely essential for life, is composed of Hydrogen and Oxygen. In the formation of water, there are two components of Hydrogen and one component of Oxygen. As

a result of it, the chemical formula of water is H_2O . But if there is the least change in its composition meaning thereby that if its harmony is disturbed, its property will be transformed and it will be anything but water. Again, when an engineer constructs a building, he creates a harmony by dividing the load of roof on the pillars. The larger and higher is the building, the more massive are the pillars. However, if the harmony is injured at any place, either the building will collapse or the pillars will give way.

Fourthly, there is a planning, an arrangement in Nature. The whole of universe appears to be governed by a system. The Holy Quran speaks of this system in Verse Nos. 3 and 4 of Surah Al-Mulk:

Thou (Muhammad) canst see
no fault in the Beneficent
One's creation; then look
again: Canst thou see any rifts?

مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفْوِثٍ
فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْأَمْرُ أَهْلًا مَّا تَرَىٰ مِن تَفْوِثٍ
ثُمَّ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ حَكْرَةً لِّمَن يَتُوبُ
الْبَصِيرُ ۝ ٤

The above Verses of Surah Al-Mulk are a sure testimony that there exists a system in the whole of universe. It is because of the fact that no device or creation can function without a system. God, in His infinite wisdom, knew it that for the creation of the universe a system was needed and therefore he created it under a plan and a system. Therefore, the religious way of life is that life which is planned and systematic. That is why, there are domains in Islam which are lawful and unlawful. Even in matters of food, there are certain things the use of which is forbidden for a Muslim.

Those great men or nations who discovered the secrets of Nature, have achieved considerable success in controlling and harnessing the forces of Nature. Those eminent scientists have also been successful in inventing such wonders as radio, television, camera etc. Even in the field of space travel, those scientists have attained so much so progress that the moon has no longer remained a mystery.

As God is Great, similarly His power of ingenuity and craftsmanship is Great. Whereas limitless are the creatures and objects of His creation, the greatest and the most wonderful is man. It was for this reason that while adoring the Almighty for moulding man into his shape Hazrat Ali (A.S.) said that 'man obviously looks not as big

as he is; in fact, a universe lies hidden in his being'. As compared to the entire human body, the pupil of an eye is a much smaller object and iris is but a fragment of pupil. But within that very very small object, is n't the whole universe packed? The iris is designed in such a way by the Great Designer called God that it has got the capacity to visualise the far off things as much it has the power to perceive the objects placed at a close distance. Further, in different shades of light and darkness, it functions in a different way. The obvious difference in vision between things placed distantly and at a close distance is that the minutest details of the distant objects will not be clearly visible to the naked eye. Myriad and countless are indeed the Blessings of God. It is for this fact that addressing man in Surah Rehman, He asks him if he (man) would yet belie His Benedictions. Each and every healthy eye, as said earlier, has enormous capacity of visualising distant and close objects. But the sun which is fixed at its place, is visible in its uniform size to all men who belong either to the North or the South regions of the world. From any of the four directions, the shape of the sun appears the same. It may also be said with regard to the moon and the stars. Such is the balance in Nature that the flow of water always makes its way towards the slope and the creeper ever tries to go upward. Similarly, the winged creatures fly in the air and creatures without wings are tied to the ground. Therefore, the entire universe is governed by immutable laws and there appears to be a balance in the whole of creation.

Lastly, justice is one of the most remarkable characteristics of Nature. It's because of the fact that the entire system of this universe appears to have been based on justice and fair-play. As God has said in Surah Al-Rehman:

7. And the sky He hath up-
lifted; and He hath set the
measure,

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ

Here the word "Mizan" does not mean either a 'balance' or a 'weighing machine'. The word 'balance' is employed here as a metaphor. As 'balance' is a symbol of justice, therefore God, in His infinite wisdom, has used the word "Mizan". This balance is of course perceptible in His entire Scheme of Creation and in the

whole of the universe ranging from zenith to nadir. The etymological meaning of "justice" is 'the maintenance of a thing at its place'. If you look analytically at the universe, you will find that the sun, the moon and the planets are functioning with utmost diligence and care - and each of them is working within its orbit; the sea-waves surge but within the bosom of the sea; night follows the day. In short, every thing is in perfect order and it is working in unison with other things. Thus, there is a balance in all the existing objects of the universe. This balance reflects the divine justice. If this justice is done away with, nothing will remain at its place: the sun, the moon, the planets and every thing that pertains to the universe, will be in a total state of disarray.

The sum total of the discussion made in the preceding pages is as follows:

- a) That there is an invariable growth and evolution in Nature.
- b) That there exists a harmony and coherence in the entire universe. This harmony is effected because it is one of the eternal laws of Nature.
- c) Underlying each and every object, there is a system.
- d) As justice is the very essence of Nature, therefore there exists a balance in each and every object of universe.

These four are the cardinal principles of Nature. As religious way of life or life governed under the dictates of religion is in complete harmony with the demand of Nature, therefore a truly balanced society enjoying the sanction of religion can only be that society which is based and enshrines within it these four cardinal principles of Nature.

In the recent past, whatever we tried to do in the name of "Shariat Bill" or the "Implementation of Shariat", it was all much ado about nothing and it was an exercise in futility. The entire unfruitful endeavour was to impose the extremely narrow, retrogressive, rigid and lifeless faith based merely on bigotry and hatred. How can such a relentlessly cruel faith of the obscurantists, steeped

in retrogression and dogmatism, be acceptable to the Muslim masses? It's all the more deplorable that these ignoramus obscurantists don't realise that no faith can be imposed on the basis of brute force. By endeavouring to introduce their own brand of Islam, they perhaps wanted to bury Islam deep down into the mire.

The greatness of Islam lies in the fact that it never advocates for rituals or dogmas. On the contrary, it always invites men to rational and intellectual thought. As it is universal in its appeal, therefore there is no room in Islam for evils such as hatred, narrow-mindedness and bigotry. In the word of Allama Iqbal, the real message of Islam is that of love, brotherhood, dignity of man. After man has recognised man, only then he can transcend higher so as to delve into the secrets of Nature. It is in this way that he can transform this world into a beautiful and happy place; it's by such a pursuit that man can rightfully occupy his place in this world; and it is by such an act that man can fulfill the mission of his creation.

At the dawn of the 15th century Hijra there have been rejoicings all over the Muslim world. Instead of wasting time in rejoicings and in arranging big public gatherings for the celebration of 'glory of Islam', the need of the hour is that the thinking minds of the Muslims should reflect over the graver and more serious issues as to why and how the Caliphate degenerated into monarchy, how can the Muslims be united and how can the ills of the Muslim society be removed? It's by love and accord, not by hatred and discord, that the Muslims of the world can be welded into an Ummah. We can only serve Islam and its real mission by disseminating its universal message of love, amity and fellow-feeling throughout the globe. We shall be able to do so only when we come out of the shackles of the corrupt priesthood - the Muslim priests who have been for the last 1400 years agents of the Muslim rulers and, for their own selfish ends, kept on issuing fake decrees in the so-called name of Islam. Thus, barring a few men of character, the Muslim priests have helped the rulers in the perpetuation of their unjust and corrupt rule. Secondly, we can bring any positive change when we evolve a criterion for judging the good deeds and misdeeds of the personages of the Muslim history and we develop courage within ourselves so as to face facts.

The Muslims can seek guidance from the Holy Quran only when they are ready to shun petty prejudices and retrogressive way of thinking. When the Muslims have developed a broad outlook and a feeling of brotherhood on universal plane is inculcated in them, only then the wisdom of the Holy Book will be comprehensible to them. Since the Book of God contains all that which is in heaven and earth and it has a universal appeal for the whole of human race, its contents cannot be understood by the prejudices of bigotry and hatred. In Surah Bani Israel, 36th Verse glaringly sheds light in this context:

Lol the hearing and the sight
and the heart - of each of these
it will be asked.

إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ
كَانَ عَنْهُ مُسَوِّدًا

While explaining the meaning of this Verse, Muslim scholars have, by and large, interpreted it in terms of sin and atonement, stressing that each and every limb of a human body will be subjected to a test on the Doomsday and the erring one will be punished according to the degree of offence. To my mind, such an interpretation covers a partial and limited sense. An eye will be held reprehensible because it has darted an evilful glance at somebody, and an ear will be punished for the ill of back-biting. This is but a superficial meaning of this Verse. To cast an evilful eye at somebody is certainly a bad thing but much worse than that is when manifold evils thrive in a society and one is but a mere spectator. Further, he is all mute. 'Seeing is believing' there is an adage. One who is a silent spectator of ills of the society and has not uttered even a word as a protest, especially when he was in a position to do so, such a person is sure to be taken to task in the world Hereafter. On the Doomsday, the Creator may ask him:

"Ye witnessed the sapling sprouting, subsequently you saw it transforming into a big tree; ye beheld a bud blossoming into a flower. Why then did ye not strive to know more about plant life? Why did ye not devote thyself to the study of botany?

"Ye saw an apple falling on the ground and yet ye cared not the least to know about the Law of Gravity which made it fall? Ye saw the tyrant ruler oppressing his subjects and ye raised no voice of protest? Ye had heard the tales of the pomp and pageantry of such a king and emperor who wielded great power and was law unto himself but when adversity befell upon him, he was so much so relegated that no land was ready to accept him. However, he could get with much difficulty two yards of land for his grave, and that too in a foreign land. Was the abject downfall of that king not a lesson for the entire mankind? Then why did ye not learn a lesson?

"Ye saw thy fellow beings in sufferings and yet thy heart was never moved; ye witnessed many a man starving and yet ye never made any effort to wipe out poverty and hunger.

"Ye adorned thy body with gold medals so as to impress others; ye made a sheer propaganda of religion to befool others and also to please the rulers. In return of that propaganda, ye filled thy coffers."

Another divine injunction which I would like to quote in this context is contained in the 3rd and 4th Verses of Surah Jasiya:

3. Lo! in the heavens and the earth are portents for believers.

إِنَّ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ لَاٰيٰتٍ
لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾

4. And in your creation, and all the beasts that he scattereth in the earth, are portents for a folk whose faith is sure:

وَفِيْ خَلْقِكُمْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّمَنْ دَانَ بِهَا
اِنَّ الْقَوْمَ لَفِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَمَعْرُوْنٌ ﴿٤﴾

These Verses truly reflect how much stress Islam lays on 'reflection' and 'meditation'. And a reflecting mind can neither be a dogmatic mind nor a prejudicial mind. Thus, in Islam, there is no room for retrogression or obscurantism. Similarly, there is much

emphasis on education. One of the most famous traditions of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) is:

اطلبوا العلم ولو كان بالالصين

"Seek knowledge, even if (you have to go as far) as China."

It is an oft-quoted saying of the Holy Prophet which is pregnant with deep thought. The meaning which people commonly infer from this saying is that in the acquisition of knowledge, distance should not be allowed to act as a barrier. This is just the outward meaning of the saying. In the days of the Holy Prophet, with no fast-moving means of communication, China was considered as a very far-flung country. But the inner meaning of the saying is: gather knowledge from whatever source it is available. It is immaterial whether the teacher is a Muslim or a non-Muslim. But, in utter violation of the spirit of the said tradition, the obscurantists of the early 19th century pronounced a decree by which the study of English was declared unlawful for the Muslims. Similarly, when Shah Waliullah translated the Holy Quran into the Persian language, the narrow-minded priests branded him an infidel.

Beyond doubt, much of the progress is made in the field of science and technology; yet much more progress is yet to be made in the times to come. But despite all the advancement, there are still controversies on the sighting of Eid moon. Each year, the Reut-e-Hilal Committee makes an announcement regarding the appearance or non-appearance of moon. The members of this Committee arrive at the decision on the basis of the version of moon-sighters who act as witnesses. The circumstantial evidence sometimes generates a controversy which mars the gaiety and festivity of the festival. Further, does the entire process of moon-sighting not look ridiculous, especially in the presence of observatories in the country?

In the Muslim countries, there too exists a controversy regarding the use of Miswak - tooth brush. Miswak is one of the happy traditions of the Holy Prophet. Instead of stressing on its traditional use, we should regard that the Holy Prophet made its use as a cleaning agent, since brush and tooth paste did not exist in the days of Hazrat Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). Further, the substance coming out

of the Miswak wood was useful for teeth and gums. In the present times, the 'Miswak' wood is not easily available in towns and cities. If people use tooth-paste and brush for cleaning their teeth, there is no harm in the use of these cleaning agents. The emphasis should be on cleanliness, whether through a 'Miswak' or by any other means.

In many affairs of life, the utterly conservative Muslims are highly critical of any departure from the conventional norms; so rigid they are in their approach that they abhor any change or novelty. I shall relate here an incident which reflects low primitive are still our people in their thought and mode of life. Maulana Shujat Ali Qadri who is now an Hon'ble Judge of the Shariat Bench, bought a scooter in the early phase of his life. Sometimes he accommodated his wife too on the scooter so as to visit relations or for shopping etc. His wife was always clad in a 'burqa'. Some of his followers seriously noticed it and they were highly critical of him. They started grumbling that their Moulti was trying to give a posture that he had become modern. They further censured him for an action which was contrary to Shariat. At last, some persons approached him for the protest. Having heard their complaint, the Maulana asked them, "Please answer this question first: whenever the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) visited another place, he sometimes took Hazrat Aisah (R.A.) with him. He made her sit with him on the camel-back. As the narrative goes, did the Prophet practise such a thing or not?" People replied affirmatively. Then the Maulana pleadingly said, "My brethren! during the days of the Holy Prophet, camel was the means of transport. It was on camel that the Prophet travelled along with his wife. In our days, camel is replaced by scooter. I take my wife for outing on this carriage. What is wrong in it? In my considered opinion, by this way I am trying to steadfastly adhere to the great and glorious tradition of the Holy Prophet."

Honestly speaking, Islam never preached to confine women to the four walls of a house nor did Islam regard them as inferior beings. It is an established fact that our religion enhanced their prestige and position. For women, the Holy Quran says:

They are raiment for you and
ye are raiment for them.

هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ

Women are the complementary part of men. They constitute half of human race. To quote Allama Iqbal:

وجودِ زن سے ہے تصویرِ کائناتیں رنگ

"Colourful has become the Universe by
the existence of a woman."

How true was Iqbal, one of the greatest poets of our time. Try to visualise a society in which there is no woman or a society in which women are treated as inferior beings. It will not be a society worth living. To sum up, a woman is not a play-thing. She is almost as capable of tackling the serious affairs of life as men are. The role of wife is undoubtedly a great role. But for a woman, there are other roles too. She is a daughter, a sister and a mother. And remember that as a mother, her role is par excellence. That is why she is regarded as the first and the great nursery. It is in the lap of a mother that a great man is always reared and trained.

The whole Muslim history is an evidence that Muslim women have performed great and commendable tasks. In our own times, women all over the world have contributed a lot to the progress and prosperity of mankind. Some of them have been good rulers and administrators too. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, Mrs. Bandranaike, Mrs. Thatcher and Mrs. Akino are some of the bright luminaries. In this galaxy, the most brilliant luminary is Ms. Benazir Bhutto, the first woman Prime Minister not only in Pakistan but the first ever in the entire Muslim world. In her person, she symbolises all the hopes and aspirations of a buoyant and dynamic Pakistan - a Pakistan which is free from all evils.

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(1)

Comments

by

Dr. Manzooruddin Ahmed,
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This, the last quarter of the Twentieth Century, bids fair to go down in history as a watershed in the saga of ideas and ideologies. It is a period of violent change and unpredictable upheavals. Both Capitalism and Communism, which have dominated the world scene for so long mainly by dint of their scientific and technological prowess, have proven their inadequacies as regards the fulfillment of human aspirations and hopes, human misery, which both had promised to eliminate, has increased and socio-economic tectonics have put to nought the fondest hopes and surest predictions of the pundits of both camps. Today, the Capitalist system is holding its own only by dint of post-facto short-term adjustments to crises, and the Communist system has at long last demands for change. An extrapolation of the contemporary world-scenario shows a very marked trend: the Capitalist system is showing signs of impending implosion, while the Communist system is showing equally clear signs of approaching explosion. It is small wonder that the thinkers around the globe have begun to speak of an alternative.

It has often been contended that Islam offers the only perfect alternative to the two dominant socio-politico-economic systems. This led during recent times to a number of international conferences to which Muslim leaders and scholars were specially invited to present their case. At the same time, the burgeoning wealth of the oil-producing Muslim countries gave them a new confidence, and much was and is still being made of an Islamic resurgence.

The objective conditions obtaining in the world of Islam, however make a mockery of all such predictions and hopes. Shorn of the glamour of petro-dollars which in any case is enjoyed by only a handful of countries the Islamic polity as a whole presents a dismal, disappointing and disheartening picture of fratricidal wars, civil strifes, unpopular governments of, at best, doubtful legitimacy, ideological cleavages, ethno-racial schisms, coupled with socio-economic backwardness, imbalances and injustices. In concrete terms, the hopes and fears of Islamic resurgence seem unfounded: a polity divided in itself can hardly pose any threat, nor can it offer any practical solution to the problems of humanity. But in the abstract, Islam does indeed offer and in good measure too what the disoriented and bewildered humanity wants. But the question almost begs itself: can Islam, as it exists in the world today, lead the humanity to progress, peace and plenty? Even the most optimistic protagonist of Islam would unhesitatingly say "No".

It is indeed a supreme irony, that, of all the world religions pagan as well as revealed, Islam is the only one which has complete, fully authentic and perfectly preserved body of basic codes, instructions and commandments. The Holy Quran was revealed, in its own words, in plain Arabic language (to the Arabs initially) so that the people could understand it. Then Muhammad were collected, verified and recorded along with a veritable treasure of biographical material with extreme meticulousness. With such a wealth of authentic reference literature to fall back on, it stands to reason that the Muslim ummah should have remained ideologically unified regarding the fundamentals and even most of the peripherals of the exploited by self-seekers to promote their own ends. The ethnic, tribal, racial and political rivalries led to literature resulting in fragmentation of Islam. Since Quran itself does not give detailed instructions of do's and don'ts, nor does it lay down exact principles, it depending upon social, economic, political and geographical conditions and historical backgrounds of the various lands. However, the initial dynamism of Islam had generated a momentum which carried the Muslims forward.

Then disaster struck. The fierce Mongols ravaged and ransacked the Muslim heartland, and what Muslims had achieved and

built up, was lost. The prime concern during those days of catastrophe was the preservation of the faith. Muslims survived as Muslims and went on to convert their heathen conquerors to their faith. But the trauma put a brake on the intellectual dynamism of Islam.

The second disaster was the confrontation of the Muslim in Africa and Asia with the European imperialism. Muslims everywhere were directly or indirectly either subjugated or their sovereignties compromised and infringed upon.

The Muslims were stunned by the rampant successes of those whom they had trounced in the Crusades. As they were weak and divided, and could match the imperialists neither in knowledge, nor in military hardware and techniques, nor in the spirit of adventure, the Muslims by the large withdrew into their shells.

In an age where dynamism was the ruling creed, the Muslim world became stagnant. The time stopped, as it were, for them. They frantically sought to preserve themselves by preserving their faith along with all its accretions; even local secular-cultural mores, traditions and usages became sanctified and were elevated to the status of Divine teachings. Muslims held fast to their beliefs, adamantly refusing to consider on merits any suggestion to change with time and to adapt themselves to the new conditions, or even to rid their beliefs of their un-islamic accretions.

Conservatism is the characteristic of all religions, since and liberal or radical or innovative approach is believed to sully and disfigure the pure faith. Muslims have carried it to illogical extremes. In the Ottoman Empire, printing of the Quran was prohibited; in Moghul India the Persian translation of the Quran earned opprobrium for its translator; in almost all Muslim countries, learning of modern western sciences was frowned upon; in South Asia, in early part of this century a well-known divine wrote an entire book advocating that the earth was flat, and in Saudi Arabia of today, in an international seminar on education, scientific theory was rejected but technology was accepted. Small wonder that narrow-mindedness, bigotry and a dogmatic orthodoxy are still prevailing in the Muslim societies to their detriment.

In these circumstances, it is futile to expect an open, intellectual, scholarly approach to a faith, which is innately and intrinsically dynamic.

However, this book, as its title suggests, is just such an attempt. It is like a breath of fresh air in a stuffy atmosphere. It is of seminal importance for the Muslims of today, as it investigates thorny problems and sheds light on a number of issues of great relevance to contemporary society that have been long obfuscated by vested interests. It charts out a path for Muslims that promises peace, prosperity and progress in this world and deliverance in the Hereafter. It steers clear of the sectarian differences that have plagued the Muslims throughout history and have directly contributed to their disunity and downfall. It should promote the long-sought but still elusive ideological unity of the Ummah.

The learned author is an 'alim' who, in contradistinction to his brethren of all persuasions, has always chosen to travel the high road of objective scholarly enquiry in preference to the dark tortuous byways of theological hair-splitting. His endeavour has always been to present Islam in a format palatable to modern mind and calculated to arouse the interest of men of other faiths, but without compromising any of the fundamental teachings of Islam. His popular but erudite lectures, televised on our national TV network, have become a source of inspiration to a very large audience. Though he is a Shia divine, he has never allowed the doctrinal and canonical differences between Shias and Sunnis to colour his outlook. In fact, Allama Abbas Haider Abidi is a religious scholar par excellence who has not only delved deep into history, theology, jurisprudence, exegesis and dialectics of Islam, but has also studied other religions, and is well acquainted with modern knowledge too; consequently he is fair, objective and academically honest in his interpretative projection of Islam. He has a unique gift of expressing difficult issues in simple language which bears testimony to his erudition. He is extremely well-equipped to act as a bridge between the old and the new and very well-placed to usher in the modern era in Islamic lands.

The present work is not a conventional book of theology that seeks, at best, to preserve and conserve, and, at worst, to mummify the faith; rather, it seeks to restore the lost dynamism to Islam and to redeem this great eternal faith in the eyes of a skeptical but questing and curious world.

(2)

Comments

by

S.K. MAHMUD

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A problem that has long troubled Muslim thinkers is how to introduce the pristine concept of Islam, as different from the brand of Islam that was advocated by the Muslim clergy, which in essence did not reflect the spirit of the living faith. Over the centuries, numerous noted thinkers and scholars of Islam in South Asia have grappled with this problem in an effort to remove the accretions of the past which have done much to misinterpret or distort the essentials of Islam. They have left behind a wealth of writings on the subject, which are even today capable of guiding the Muslims in Pakistan. The last great thinker was Allama Iqbal, whose "Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam" was aimed at re-evaluating the pre-eminence of a dynamic Islam from out of the heavy layers of dogmatism and traditionalism that stultified its lustre.

In the 1980s, for reasons that are explained in considerable depth in the book "An Intellectual Approach To Islam", Pakistani religious thinkers were faced by the challenge of having to once again evaluate the true Islam. A movement, political in nature but religious in content, exploiting the peculiar situation in the country, was initiated with the claim of Islamisation of Pakistan. The net effect has been to create greater sectarian problems than before, and severely strain the fabric of religious unity in the country. As a part of the Movement, a Shariat Bill was sought to be legislated, which if passed, would have imposed the faith of a particular sect on the

others. The bill, in the form it was prepared, fortunately did not come to fruition as wiser counsel prevailed. Much of the "Islamisation" policy was formulated by the leaders of a particular new point and a band of religious advisors, whose concept of Islam was narrow verging on obscurantism.

The author of the book "An Intellectual Approach To Islam" in making an empirical assessment of the sectarian biased Islamisation policy rightly asks: "Do we want to confine the unbounded and limitless span of Islam to narrow limits?" The sectarian divide had never hindered the unity of Islam as the great jurists, who founded their own schools of thought were men of eminence and had the strength of character to respect each other in spite of their differences. They have left behind noble traditions of tolerance and esteem. But when, in spite of such a legacy, the narrowness of sectarianism took over, it was the world of Islam that suffered. This tendency again came to the forefront in the 80's in Pakistan with unfortunate results. The approach that was being offered under the felicitous title of Islamisation, did harm as it revived ancient animosities. Islam does not countenance any such policies which would pit Muslim against Muslim and reduce the Ummah to a highly compartmentalised body, divided by walls of prejudice. It is contrary to the spirit of Islam which enjoins unity among the believers rather than division. It has fragmented the national ethos, and accentuated the sectarian divide.

It is an unfortunate anomaly that the faith which gave mankind a new set of values which enshrine law and lay emphasis on justice, a new constitution and a new direction, was being interpreted as a religion steeped in rituals and customs, dogmatic and incapable of meeting the challenge of a changing world. The history of the Muslim world is littered with the debris of great empires and civilisations whose inability to comprehend the meaning of changing led to their demise, either at the hands of external forces or from within. The fate of the twentieth century Muslim world, it is expected, would be cast in a different mould as the lessons of the past would act as guiding posts. There are instances at present of Muslim countries which have risen to new heights, but there are also instances of countries which are still trapped in the cobwebs of an interpretation which abhors change. In Pakistan, after years of

effort to benefit from the enlightenment provided by the great thinkers and scholars of Islam, an element of recidivism took shape, partly encouraged by the political circumstances in the country. Matters which had never been issues suddenly found eminence, as the protagonists of a new order in the country embarked on a drive to assert their version of Islam on the nation. Whether all what was being offered as the basis of faith was in conformity with the direction of a particular school of thought, is not clear, but it was certainly not designed to prepare Pakistan for the twenty-first century. Opposing all manner of change, the traditional cry of "Kufr" was raised by one segment to denounce everything that was novel or new in the field of thought or deed. The writer of the book points out that "This ostrich-like attitude is nothing but an escape. That's why the Muslims have been backward in many walks of life." His argument rests on the firm foundation that change is a law of Nature and that there is nothing in Islam which hinders the acceptance of change. What is enduring is the basic tenets & Principles of Islam that are unchanging. Ijtihad is the corner-stone of a vibrant and favoured looking Islam. In a telling passage, Allama Abidi stresses that "One who clashes with nature gets smashed. Islam is not a religion of customs and rituals, it's fundamentally a way of life which is very close to Nature. Unless and until we recognise this fact, we cannot get over the predicament that we are unfortunately placed in."

The answer to the problem that was alluded to earlier, lies in correctly understanding and re-evaluating Islam. This itself is based on the accent Islam places on incessantly striving to "discover new horizons of knowledge, intellect and cognition." It is necessary to reconstruct a new approach to Islam which would free it of the trammels of ritual and customs, dogmatism and traditionalism. The noted thinkers and scholars of the past addressed themselves to this issue. Their inquiries have guided Muslims who sought enlightenment. The writer of the book "An Intellectual Approach To Islam", further pursues the same task, but from an approach that is in keeping with the requirements of the present times. It is not a new interpretation of Islam that he offers, but an evaluation of what Islam stands for, as different from what is held by others who follow a relatively moribund attitude. The above

constitutes my personal views in evaluating the book. It undoubtedly addresses itself to the burning issue of an interpretation of Islam. The issue begs resolution, as a way to clarifying our concepts and removing a hurdle that divides the polity. The book is written by Allama Abbas Haider Abidi whom I respect for his objectivity and erudition. He has dealt with a sensitive subject in a scholarly way which is commendable. I hope that it will be found of immense value in all the circles of educated and cultural men not living only within Pakistan but even abroad.

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(3)

Comments

by

Mr. Hashim Raza, I.C.S./C.S.P.
Former Governor of East Pakistan.

Hamari Manzil,
14-A Muhammad Ali Housing
Society,
Karachi,
21st September, 1988.

My dear Abidi Sahib,

I thank you for sending me a copy of your treatise entitled "An Intellectual Approach to Islam". I felicitate you on writing this thought-provoking and well-reasoned paper. I am in full agreement with your conclusions that.

a) Islam is not merely a religion of customs and rituals but is fundamentally a way of life which is very close to nature.

b) The mission of Prophet of Islam (S) was to reform the entire mankind and not the Muslims alone. This is why he is known as Rahmatul-lil-Alemeen.

One of the greatest dramatists and thinkers of modern times, George Bernard Shaw prophesied that Islam would be the future religion of Europe. I quote him:

"If any religion has the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe, within the next 100 years, it can

only be Islam. I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its vitality. It is the religion which appears to me to possess the assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make its appeal to every age. I believe if a man like Muhammad were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would be acceptable to faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today."

Hesketh Pearson, in his biography of Bernard Shaw, states that he was an atheist and his religion was creative evolution. I quote Hesketh Pearson:

"In all history the one person who exactly answered his requirements, who would have made a perfect Shavian hero was Muhammad. In 1913, he wanted to write a play on the subject for Forbes Robertson. Four years earlier, he had informed the Parliamentary Committee on the Censorship that he had long desired to dramatize the life of Muhammad. But the possibility or fear of a protest from the Turkish Ambassador caused the Lord Chamberlaine to refuse to licence such a play. Nevertheless his fancy continued to play around the prophet who is described by the elderly gentleman in *Back to Methusalem* as "a truly wise man, for he founded a religion without a Church."

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, through whose matchless leadership the God-gifted State of Pakistan came into existence on August 14, 1947, did not unfortunately live to frame the Constitution of Pakistan. In his broadcast talk to the people of the United States of America, recorded in February 1948, he had given the following guidelines for the Constitution of Pakistan. I quote:

"The Constitution of Pakistan has yet to be framed by the Pakistan Constituent Assembly. I do not know what the ultimate shape of this constitution is going to be, but I am sure that it will be of a democratic type,

embodying the essential principles of Islam. Today they are as applicable in actual life as they were 1300 years ago. Islam and its idealism have taught us democracy. It has taught equality of men, justice and fairplay to every body. We are the inheritors of these glorious traditions and are fully alive to our responsibilities and obligations as framers of the future constitution of Pakistan. In any case Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic state to be ruled by priests with a divine mission. We have many non-Muslims - Hindus, Christians and Parsis - but they are all Pakistanis. They will enjoy the same rights and privileges as any other citizen and will play their rightful part in the affairs of Pakistan."

Why is it that the prophecy of George Bernard Shaw that Islam would be acceptable to Europe has not yet been fulfilled? It is because the Muslims of the 20th century have failed to live up to the tenets and traditions of Islam. The recent long drawn-out war between Iran and Iraq is a matter of shame for every son of Islam and has made a mockery of our claim that all Muslims are brothers. Unless the Muslims of the world unite, the prophecy of George Bernard Shaw would not be fulfilled.

In our own country the Constitution-making and Constitution-breaking processes have spoiled our image among the comity of nations. The first Martial Law was declared in our country by General Muhammad Ayub Khan, then C-in-C of our Army, on the night between 7th & 8th October, 1958, and was withdrawn on June 8, 1962. The second Martial Law was imposed on 25th March, 1969, by General Yahya Khan, then C-in-C of our Army. The third Martial Law was proclaimed on 7th July, 1977, by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, then C-in-C of our Army. And yet all these three Generals had taken the oath of allegiance to defend the Constitution of Pakistan.

In his address to the Officers of the Staff College Quetta on the 14th June, 1948, the Quaid-e-Azam, after paying a tribute to the spirit and morale of the Army, observed and I quote:

"One thing more I am persuaded to say this, because during my talks with one or two very high-ranking

officers I discovered that they did not know the implications of the Oath taken by the troops of Pakistan. Of course, an oath is only a matter of form; what is more important is the true spirit and the heart.

But it is an important form and I would like to take the opportunity of refreshing your memory by reading the prescribed oath to you.

"I solemnly affirm, in the presence of the Almighty God, that I owe allegiance to the Constitution and the Dominion of Pakistan (mark the words Constitution and the Government of the Dominion of Pakistan) and that I will as the Dominion of Pakistan forces and go within the terms of my enrollment wherever I may be ordered by air, land or sea and that I will observe and obey all commands of any officer set over me....."

As I have said just now, the spirit is what really matters. I should like you to study the Constitution which is in force in Pakistan at present and understand its true constitutional and legal implications when you say that you will be faithful to the Constitution of the Dominion."

The new Chief of the Army Staff, General Mirza Aslam Baig, in his address to the Officers of the Pakistan Army on the 25th August, 1988, echoed the observations of the Quaid-e-Azam on the role of the Pakistan Army. I quote his words:

"The security of the nation and the country is our sole objective and Pakistan Army will fulfill all its obligations in this regard..... It will be our earnest effort to help maintain law and order in the country, to see that November 16 polls promise becomes a reality, to help strengthen relationship between the Federal and Provincial Governments, to create a conducive atmosphere to bring about a true rapport between the masses and their leaders and to eliminate all those obstacles impending

our march to attain the cherished goals of national life....."

In an hour long address, General Mirza Aslam Baig held out the assurance that armed forces would fulfill all these obligations. He advised the armed forces to keep aloof from politics and said that it was the sole domain of the politicians.

The need of the hour is not to frame new Constitutions but to transform our people through a moral rearmament movement. If we speak the truth, shun corruption and sifarish, be honest in our dealings, resist 'zulm' and do justice to all we can march forward with self-confidence and dignity.

I compliment you on the balanced views expressed in the pamphlets which you have sent to me from time to time about the current affairs.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(S. HASHIM RAZA)

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